TAKE ONE

The Canadian Film Magazine

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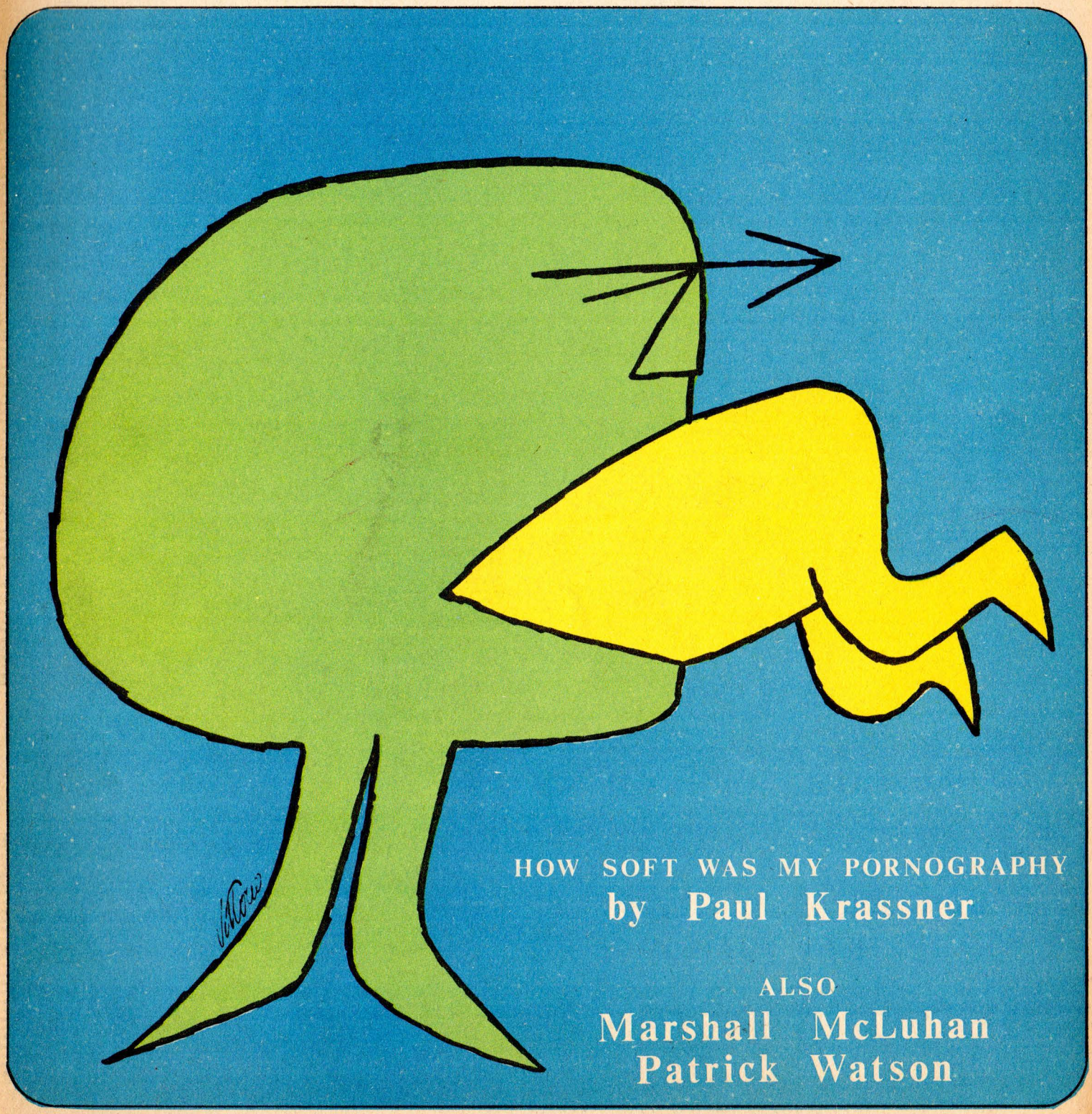

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by Paul Krassner

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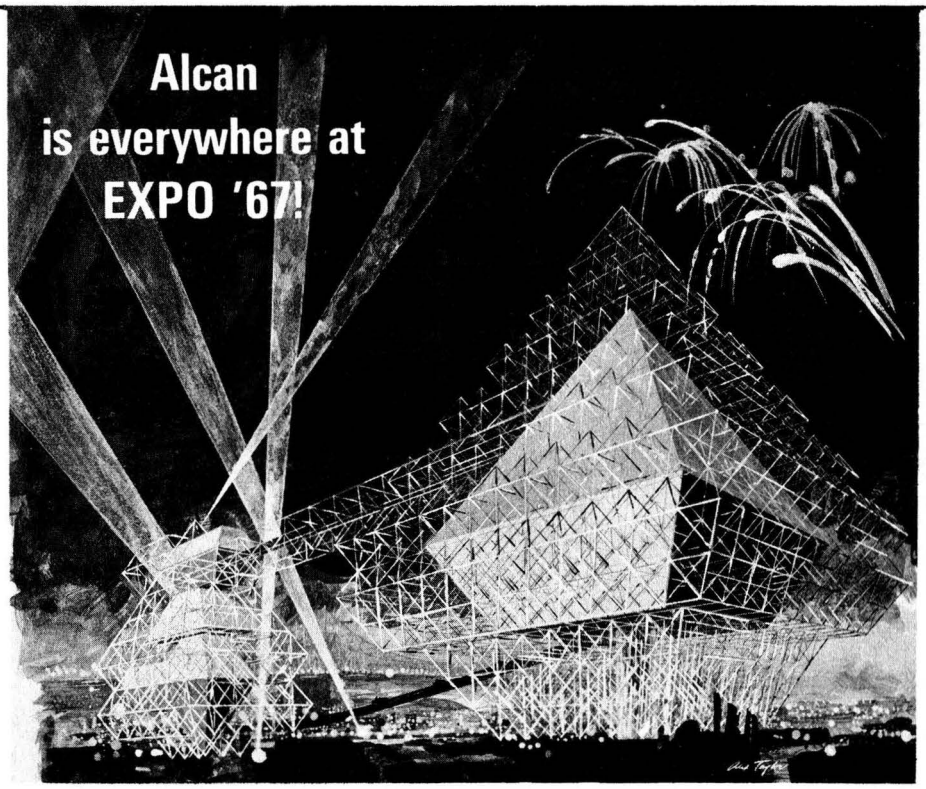

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THEATRE AND REALITY: A CONVERGENCE of forms

BY PATRICK WATSON

I have been increasingly struck over the past few years, in contemplation of my own work, and that of my colleagues and counterparts, that the best that is being done in television now is theatre in fact, though it appears in the disguise of "Public Affairs".

It had become clear to me only a few months after I began to work at television in earnest, over a decade ago, that the medium is not well suited to the transmission of ideas in the traditional sense of that word. My first assignments, as a neophyte producer-director, were all panel discussions. There was a weekly series called "This Week", every Sunday night after the "National News", in which a group of commentators was assembled to try to make some sense out of the week's events. That was the summer and fall of 1956, and the winter that followed. Suez and Hungary had enriched our violence-diet; so there was plenty of meat for discussion, and plenty of discussers. And week after week we assembled them, under the stewardship of philosophers usually, Professor Lynch of St. Michael's College, or Professor Marcus Long of University College. And much of the discussion was well-informed, and all of it was articulate, and I went about my work much satisfied with the fine contribution I was making to public understanding by organizing and presenting such a high level of rationalization of the irrational world in which we lived.

But I began to notice a number of interesting and disquieting facts about these programs. The first was that no-one much was watching. Anyone asking what I did for a living when told I produced "This Week" looked blank in a manner pretty disquieting to the newly-dazzled-with-the-glamour-of-it-all TV Boy Wonder.

My father was alive then, and slowly emerging from the shock he had quite genuinely felt when I deserted honorable scholarly pursuits for the meretricious seductions of the Mass Media. Having no TV set, but feeling it important to keep up a fatherly flow of advice perhaps, or perhaps concerned, or maybe only curious, he used to slip over to a friend's house to watch my Sunday Night displays of other people's brilliance, and then on Monday Morning he would tell me about it.

And the first thing I noticed was that the programs he found meritorious (instead of meretricious — a word I love and cannot help repeating even in antonymic echo) were those in which there had been a good deal of quarrelling, or at least a relatively high temperature; in which the exchanges of opinion had been characterized by considerable polarization and strong feeling. My father was a well-informed man. He was a soldier and a teacher and the events of these times gave him meat for much talk, and he understood the issues well and had decided his views on the matters "This Week" was attempting to illuminate for him *before* coming to the TV screen.

Now the parts of the programs that pleased him were those characterized by point-scoring, particularly (but not exclusively for he was a generous man) points scored for his side.

My father's dramatic criteria for the excellence of a show weren't, I discovered, unusual, and certainly not much removed from my own, when I thought about it. But I always found it hard to keep track of What Was Said when the fighting reached a suitably entertaining level in these shows, and I used to worry about that, and formulated a dilemma for myself and my supervisors and colleagues, which they weren't very helpful with. The dilemma went like this: which is more important in a TV Panel Discussion, Heat or Light?

It seemed to me then, that if you couldn't recall the "content" of a free-swinging hot and heavy panel, then it was a failure. But it was also clear that the polite panels, however wise and enlightening, caused switches to be turned off. Or at the very best they were recalled as boring.

Mr. Watson was producer and co-host of CBC-TV's "This Hour Has Seven Days". He is at present lecturing in communications at the University of Waterloo.

I realize now that the Light-versus-Heat dilemma was not useful language, and that my notion of content in television was unreal, and I'll come back to that point shortly.

The next observation that began to clarify itself in the all-too-slowly diminishing murk of my understanding of TV was that people watching these panels, whether or not they were following the issues with much understanding, were getting a very clear view of the personalities involved.

"That Claude Dewhurst!" my father would explode. "Good Night he's an arrogant man! Now he really got off a couple of good points at your economist whatsisname, and I won't forget the look on his face when he started to call Blank a fascist and thought better of it but . . . etc."

By now the little bit of analysis I had been able to make of what was happening in these programs, with their components of dramatic conflict and character development and personality, should have tipped me to the fact that looking at them as theatre would have been to choose a much better set of language than any we were yet using. But I didn't get that far until the height of *This Hour Has Seven Days* when suddenly, in yet another attempt to analyse the Hot Seat Interview for yet another pseudo-intellectual irritated by the submergence of what he thought ought to be the "content", I saw that the Hot Seat was quite clearly and unequivocally a dramatic presentation, irrational as good drama is, composed of human beings in conflict, working its way with the audience through involvement and identification, and having more to do with the heart than the mind.

I had long ago realized that the only relevant way to discuss content was to examine the total event in such an encounter, and that such examination would produce, inevitably, evidence that what was communicated could best be understood in terms of personal relationships and personal involvement and identification, and the Theatre image was the one I had been looking for all along, obviously. God knows why it was so long elusive.

Studies had been done on the famous Kennedy-Nixon debates that took place on Television and radio simultaneously, comparing the effects on the audiences for both media. And it was found that those hearing the debates on radio only were able to repeat reasonably well the substance of at least some of the arguments, and occasionally even to quote a line or a phrase. But those who saw the TV debates were preoccupied with personality and with conflict and seldom recalled the issues. For radio listeners, the two men were about evenly matched in their handling of the issues, and some found JFK's voice a little distracting, in a negative way. But we know who won the TV debates, and I think most political analysts agree on the critical role they played in the election that followed. And what it was more than anything else was a triumph of personality in a theatrical structure.

John Steinbeck, in an essay that may have been slightly frivolous, wrote a few years ago about *How to Tell the Good Guys from the Bad Guys.* He analyzed the Western first, reminding us that the convention had become quite clearly delineated over the years, in the Western, that the villain was identified by three factors: he wore dark clothes, always; he needed a shave; he sneered and mugged a good deal. The good guys, on the other hand, were well groomed, wore light-coloured clothes, were clean-shaven, and relatively free from facial expression of any kind except an almost expressionless look of quiet determination, and occasionally benevolence. Steinbeck then applied these criteria to the Television appearances, during the famous Army-McCarthy hearings, of McCarthy himself, and Judge Joseph Welch who exposed him, and thus demonstrated that the dramatic conventions of the American Movie had helped to rid the country of its worst witch hunter since the Salem High Jinks. We should have paid more attention to Steinbeck's piece.

While the growth of these ideas in my mind had been helping me to understand what it was we were doing with *Seven Days* — not just in the Hot Seat by any means, and I'll come back to other TV forms — the world of traditional theatre was becoming interested in non-fiction in a new way.

On the New York stage, *The Andersonville Trial* treated an historical event with considerable respect for accuracy, and did a whopping business. Trials-at-law, of course, are highly theatrical in structure to begin with, as Desmond Morton, one of our most noted teachers of law has observed. (Indeed he says they *are* theatre.)

In Germany, *The Deputy* packed theatres for a long and detailed reconstruction of the role of Pius XII in the persecution of the Jews by Hitler, while modern pure fiction theatre did not nearly so well next door.

In England, *Oh What a Lovely War,* composed entirely of letters, diaries, despatches, headlines, and songs of World War I proved to be brilliant and durable theatre, and translated well to Toronto and New York as well.

Alongside these three examples of the dramatist's art applied to the task of understanding real events, developments in the documentary film are adding impetus to the convergence of theatrical techniques with scholarly or journalistic intentions. Douglas Leiterman's brilliant breakthrough, in the field of Canadian Documentary, with *One More River,* a film deriving some technical insights from the BBC film *Chicago,* by Denis Mitchell, used no scripted commentary, but knit together a dramatic composition in black and white that involved us in the race conflict of the Southern United States with a sudden

newness of vision.

In England, Peter Watkins, with his brilliant *Culloden,* and *The War Game,* used the techniques of television handheld camera documentary to, in the one case recreate and in the other forecast, history.

Convergence.

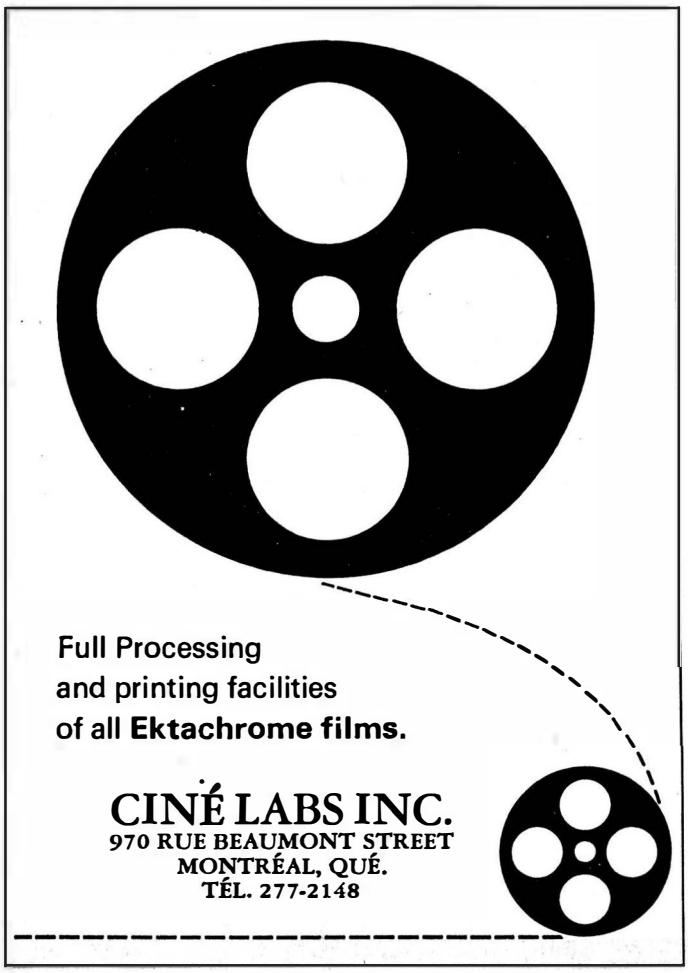
Increasingly we hunger, I think, to have our dramatists find their themes in the specific and topical fabric of our daily life and our daily newspaper, and increasingly they are satisfying us. Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* is really a documentary drama script as much as it is a non-fiction novel (his term). Increasingly we demand that our documentarists stop talking to us *about* their subject (God, will they please listen!) and take us into the subjects dramatically, without pausing to *explain* all the time. Allan King is doing it with overwhelming power in his *Warrendale.* Flaherty did it years ago with *Louisiana Story.* How much we have forgotten that he taught us with that one!

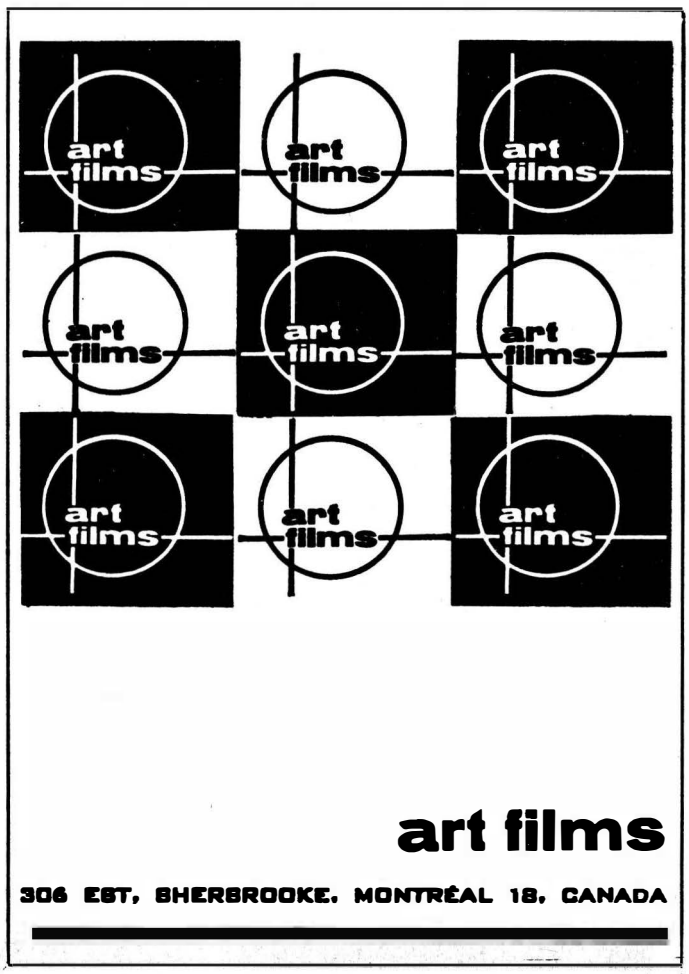
Grierson, with his concern for social message in documentary, left Canada with a kind of hangup over the need to explain and to organize in rational patterns. Flaherty saw film differently, as a way of recording with reverence all the sweet and the violent ambiguities of life, stacked up against each other in terms of emotional and personal models and conflicts. He took us into an experience; he didn't tell us *about* it.

For years CBC Public Affairs television, dominated by a heritage of translated radio producers and good academic minds acted as though television was a medium you used to tell people *about* experience. Well, it can be that, of course, with some effect. But how much more it can be as a provider of situations into which you are drawn, to share an experience, not hear an explanation.

That's what it was all about, you see, when Bob Hoyt blew his stack at the Ku Klux Klansmen who wouldn't shake hands. It wasn't a question there of whether or not *Seven Days* was reporting fairly about the Klan and Negro. It was taking you into a situation in which you felt helpless and outraged, and in large measure the helplessness and outrage are your own sweet fault, and you were angry for it. A very ambivalent, ambiguous, difficult experience; but illuminating.

Look for this convergence of the dramatic with the journalistic, in all the media. It is a growing mode, and a good one. It is a way of knowing suited to film and television, and the sooner our Public Affairs producers (myself among the worst of them in this, I confess as I look at my past) stop talking at their audience, and strangle the commentators and the typewriters most of the time, we shall rejoice in an experiential approach to these media that is appropriate to our technical skill. T.O.





MARSHALL MCLUHAN

Do you consider yourself a film fan? Do you go to many films?

I just accept them as part of my everyday environment and I would go to a film the same way I pick up a newspaper . . . The newspaper, as a form, is close to the new cinéma verité; for example, it has no story-line and cinéma verité consists partly at least of removing the story-line from ordinary events. By taking off the story-line, it permits people to participate more deeply in the process being shown, whether watching a cross-walk or traffic signal or trimming a Christmas tree. If there's no story-line, the viewer has to create something all the time, like a detective story, by pulling out the connections between the events: the reader has to make the story. In a newspaper, the reader has to make the news because there is no story-line given between the items: no connection.

Do you know anything about the films of Andy Warhol?

Sure. It's verité stuff. Again you pull off the connections. You take any given process, anything that's going on here or outside there, and you simply arbitrarily allow a certain development to occur . . . You simply take the environment as art form . . . My studies are bearable to me because they involve me in understanding processes. My critics are more interested in *products,* which they think of as content, and they don't have any eyes or ears for the process at all . . . I have the utmost contempt for all pop art and pop culture as content, but I have to live with it. Why not, therefore, understand it? As soon as you start analysing and studying the processes involved, it becomes bearable.

In strict terms of the content, as you said, as compared to the process, do you have any favorites in terms of films? You must enjoy some more than others, strictly because of . . .

Strictly because of the rear-view mirror: content. I think I would buy the older pictures that I have seen or known of when I was a youngster, simply because the habit of revisiting, of going through something again, is more interesting than for the first time, of course. If someone turned up who could reprocess our own present in new ways, I would find that very interesting. You see, Resnais doesn't do that; he simply takes old magazines, old pop art and puts them on the screen, giving people a slight rear-view mirror feeling of nostalgia, that's all. The same with Batman: it takes the rear-view mirror of old comic books and gives people a nostalgic return to their fifteen-year-old days.

Which films of Resnais were you thinking of, in particular?

Marienbad, or any other one, as far as I've seen them. I find them *unbearably* dull and stupid. I mean, any two minutes of any picture of his, and I've *had* it. That's true of most pictures of any sort: I only need a couple of minutes of any film in order to have the full package. Because I only look at them structurally, I'm not looking for any story-line or any connections.

What you have said would seem to me to throw a lot of light on, perhaps, the work of Jean-Luc Godard in his use of jump-cuts.

Well, yes. And also, I noticed that an area that hasn't been dealt with is the sound track, where just as much jump-cutting is needed as in the pictorial side. But we still go on with radio sound tracks for films. Radio with pictures equals films. Why should that be? It might be far more effective to use the same abrupt leap-frogging with the sound as with the picture. *Dr. Zhivago* does a bit of this. The sound track in *Zhivago* is lacking in any gradations; it is abrupt and violent. It's almost shocking in its suddenness, whereas most sound is gradually built up: if a car is started or a train is starting, the sound comes gradually. Just as you expect a graduation in light in pictures, you expect a similar pictorial treatment of sound. And you get it. In *Zhivago*, they throw that away and just make the most violent leaps: anytime anybody gets up out of a chair, or a starts, or anything starts, instead of a gradual approach to the situation, there's just a violent shock — involvement in it. And it's curious: it draws attention to the fact that you're really dealing with a separate medium. The sound track on TV shouldn't have very much in common with the sound track in films; at the present time, all you get on TV is a movie sound track.

Do you feel that bringing sound to the film changed it as a medium?

Completely. It changed photography. What you

see is very different when you have a sound track, as you can tell when you look at the old silents. With the coming of sound, they had to pack more into the shot, in one way. They had to make it more expressive. Any one moment of the shot had to have more to say. . .

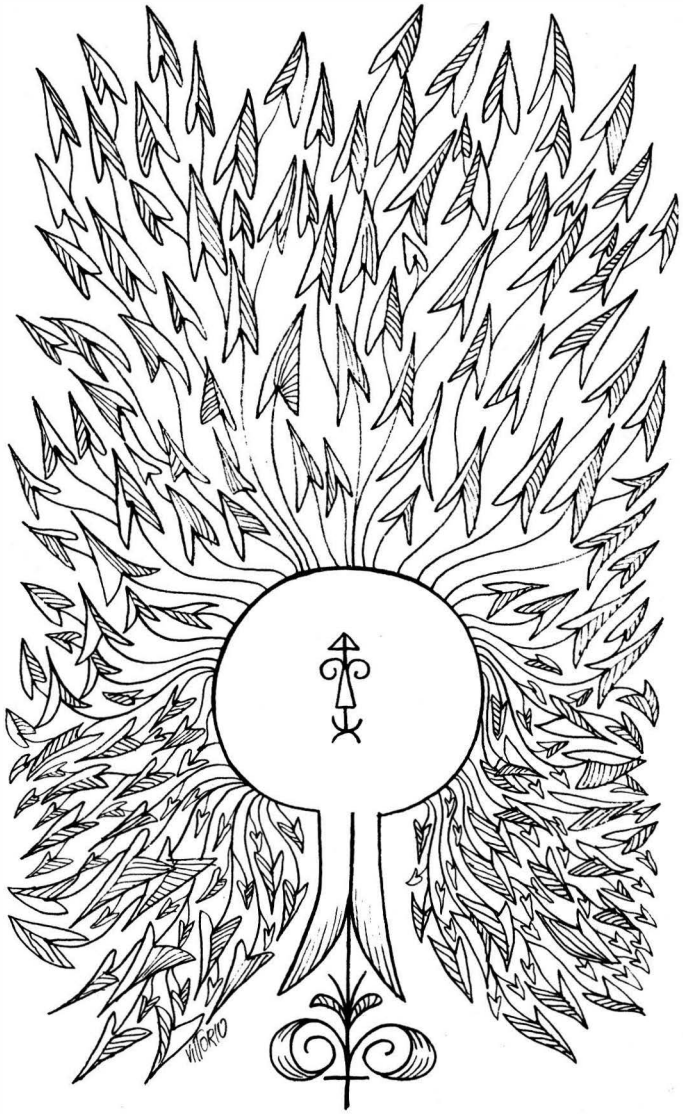
. . . Colour has changed photography and cinema in the direction, again, of involvement and so has colour television.

Why are you more involved with colour movies?

Because, you don't see colour with the outside of the eye, you see it with the cones, which is very much more tactile. The periphery of the eye gives you the black and white world. It gives movement and light and shade. The centre of the eye is alone able to see colour, but the area of the cones is also a world of abrasion and inter-play and rubbing and tactility. Primitive people are strong on colour because they're strong on touch, and weak in vision. What we call visual is not for them. So, the colour world is pre-literate in stress and tendency, and means, again, more involvement. Colour is a much more involving experience than black and white; you're relatively detached in black and white . . . In movies, Technicolor meant far more stress on erotic themes: again, because more involving. And so will colour TV.

With people's tastes in entertainment changing, do you feel that the film will, as a necessity, have to change itself drastically?

Oh, it'll change. But you see, the Western was a film form in the twenties, and the out-of-door world was tremendously valuable in iconographic terms because there's no enclosed space. The moment you put an action inside a picture-frame stage, it changes its character. It becomes spectacle instead of being something in which to participate. So, the Western is very highly favoured for television reception. For television audiences accustomed to TV, they ought to buy the Western far more than the old moving picture audience would ever buy the Western. But, the Western is excellent in terms of the medium because it permits this high involvement. *You* have to do the enclosing; *you* have to fill in those spaces. Enclosed space is pictorial; open space is iconic. . . . That's why cinéma verité is really an attempt



to break loose, not only from story-line but from pictorial boundaries. And accepting live processes — incompleted processes — like movement of traffic, ordinary games, and so on.

What exactly do you mean by iconic?

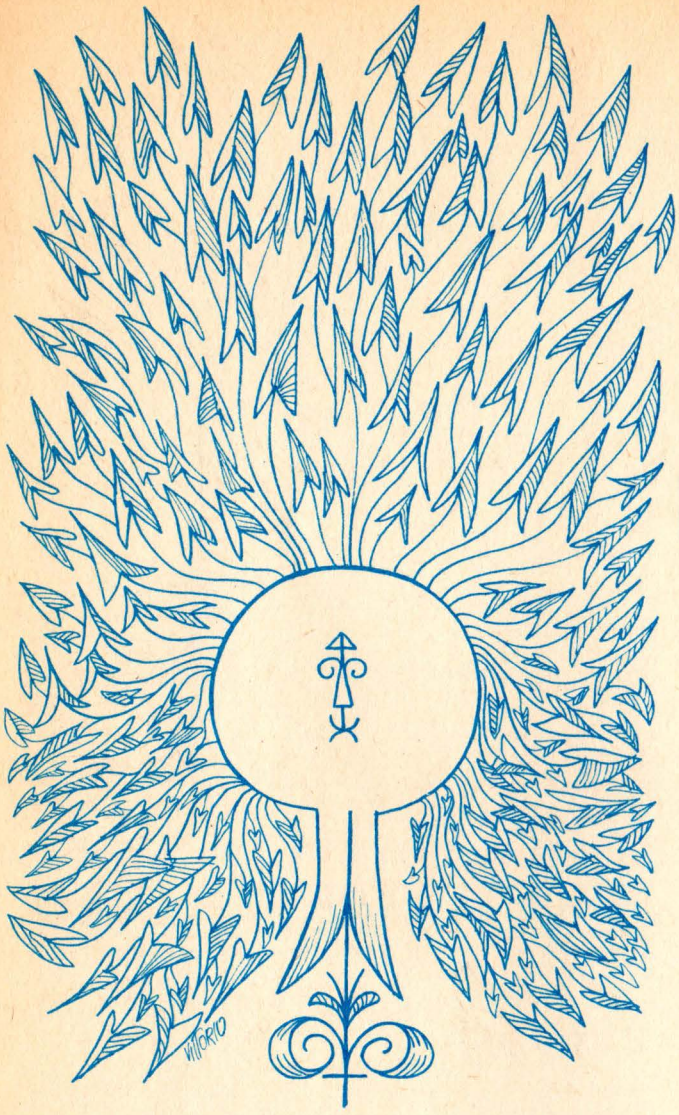
. . . It's like the cartoon as opposed to the picture. The photograph is filled in, the cartoon is not. The cartoon is good TV, the photograph is not.

Iconic, then, would be involving.

Because, you have to complete the image at every step.

It seems that an unfortunately large number of times, I've been sitting in the theatre, having some lady sitting behind me telling me what's happening on the screen: "Oh look, he's opening the door."

It's like the back-seat driver. This is again the urge to participate in a medium that doesn't really invite participation, but which really asks you to be detached and stand back. But, anybody riding along in a car feels part of the action of the



car, and the driver always regards this as absolutely uncalled for. Why should these people, just because they happen to be in this car, feel the need to participate in the act of driving? So there's a real clash, there, of media. By the way, that's very useful; I'm glad I thought of that. The motor-car is really a movie — a one-man movie . . . You see, when you're driving a car, you have a screen and you have a motion-picture, and you put on your own show by simply sitting at the wheel and moving along: you have a movie, literally, in process while you drive. And this is not the case in TV: the TV viewer is in an altogether different relation to the outside world than the motor-car driver or the movie-goer. The movie-viewer goes out and sees the world with the camera: Fox Movietone, Eyes of the World. The TV viewer doesn't go out to see the world; it comes inside him.

. . . But the TV viewer is not a one-man movie; far from it. That moves into his unconscious world, not his consciousness. And the movie takes you out, *consciously,* into the world, and TV takes you into your own *unconscious.* It's an archetypal world.

Do you think that the fact that movies are a hot medium will eventually put them in the position where, perhaps, people simply won't want to see them?

Insofar as they see them on TV they are translated into a cool medium. They don't see movies on TV; they see TV.

Well, there are differences in the way films are made for television and . . .

Sure. Well, it's worth watching those differences. But the experience is altogether different, although most of it is subconscious in both cases. And again, you see, whenever anything becomes totally environmental like a motor-car, you are completely oblivious of its relation to film. You see, the camera extends your feet and your eyes; a movie camera carries your eyes out on your feet into the world — it's mobile. And TV doesn't do that; it doesn't extend your eyes and your feet, it extends your eyes and your hands: it feels, it handles, it scans the environment, by scanning, by handling.

[redacted]

. . . The TV people still try to create a little picture frame. That's nothing to do with TV, that square little box; this is a hang-over from the old movie screen and the picture-frame stayed. Now, they still think of that little panel as flat, pictorial, perspective world: it isn't any of those things. And so we're about to get this new laser-ray TV image which is totally in the room in the round — all sides at once — multi-dimensional. This has already been technologically realized or achieved. I'm not saying this is an advantage to anybody, simply that it creates this dimension and whenever that extra dimension is created that way, everything else falls into place accordingly. A displacement of any one component in a total situation will displace all the other factors somewhat.

This brings to mind the NFB's Labyrinth *at Expo, where there will be screens not only on all sides of you and above you, but you'll be standing on one also: you will be the screen.*

When you become the screen, you go inside yourself — in depth. Instead of being extrovert and going outside into the world, you go inside yourself: this is LSD. TV, in other words, is an

[redacted]

LSD world, in which you go for a trip, not out into Fox Movietone News world, but inside *you*. *Labyrinth* is just a recognition of this fact -- but, so is LSD. In TV you are the screen, not the camera. The effect is to change your body percept — you have a different image of yourself altogether, like the French-Canadians have had since TV. And people respond, accordingly, to the image they have of themselves and not to what they're *told* about themselves. But going inside oneself is Oriental. TV is an Oriental spiritual instrument, and the whole Western world is being carried in an Oriental direction by TV.

. . . I used to think that we were engaged in putting consciousness outside as an environment. Now, I realize that that was a rear-view mirror image, that what we have already done is to put the human unconscious outside. The unconscious is the world in which everything happens at once; in our unconsciousness, there's no time structure. Everything is simultaneous; everything that ever happened to the race is simultaneous. Now, in our electronic environment -- information environment -- everything that ever happened is out there *now,* and is retrievable *now.* All the events, all the happenings are out in our electronic world simultaneously: this gives them an archetypal, unconscious character. So a newspaper is an iconic and unconscious, subconscious, archetypal world. You simply take the story-line off the news, or rather, take the date-line off a newspaper, and then look at it. You'll see that it's a surrealist poem. So long as there's a date-line on, that's environmental and hides the form. But there's no connection between anything in a newspaper; everything is simultaneous, under one dateline. That's subconscious. T.O.

Before printing could affect you, you had to learn to read; and until 1870 you mostly had not learned to read. But even when you had, reading was not really a practical business for a manual laborer. Ask any man who has done eight or ten hours' heavy manual labor what happens to him when he takes up a book. He will tell you that he falls asleep in less than two minutes. Now, the cinema tells its story to the illiterate as well as to the literate; and it keeps its victim (if you like to call him so) not only awake but fascinated as if by a serpent's eye. And that is why the cinema is going to produce effects that all the cheap books in the world could never produce.

— George Bernard Shaw, 1914
(Quoted in *The Serpent's Eye,*
by Donald P. Costello)

POEM

the ticket girl, unpromised
as her smile,
the movie-house
me pulled down breathing aisles
to front row seats
and light unpeopled thin...

sometimes the movie begins
when you're not watching:
i was only talking
until your warehouse eyes
and mouth so suddenly melting...

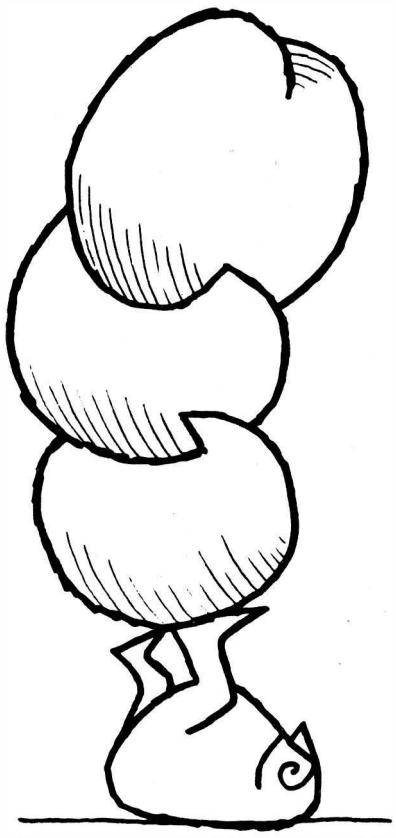
reminding me of me,
me near.

then, not to disappear
i held your hand
not to disappear.

LAWRENCE WASSER

HOW SOFT WAS MY PORNOGRAPHY

by Paul Krassner
Drawings by Vittorio



When the United States Supreme Court in the *Roth* case first gave its shaky definition of hardcore pornography in terms of the arousal of prurient interest, we all knew what they basically meant — stag films, dirty pictures, horny underground literature — but since prurience is such a totally subjective quality, I felt that there was, particularly in the field of advertising, a genre of deliberate pandering to the sexually unfulfilled consumer, and I called it soft-core pornography.

There is a rare sense of pride one experiences at having added a phrase to the language. At last I know how Mr. Kleenex must have felt.

A contemporary classic of soft-core pornography is the Clairol hair-rinse series: a lady accompanied by the legend, "Does she or doesn't she? . . . Only her hairdresser knows for sure."

Of course, stereotypes being what they are, most hairdressers might *know* for sure whether their customers do or don't, but they sure wouldn't *care.*

Originally, the lady in question was pictured alone, but the boys down at the agency thought this was too blatant, and so they added a child onto her shoulder, so although it was obvious she *did,* it could now be inferred that she was married so it was okay.

Her unoriginal sin could be absolved at the local super market. Today, when a minister speaks of redemption, he is referring to the new pew he's just gotten for the proper amount of trading stamps which members of his congregation left in the collection basket.

A decade after that hard-core decision in the *Roth* case, the Supreme Court has finally caught up with its own soft-core implications in the *Ginzburg* case, in which the ruling declared that material could be judged obscene on the basis of the way in which it was advertised to the public.

Justice Douglas dissented: "The advertisements of our best magazines are chock-full of thighs, ankles, calves, bosoms, eyes, and hair, to draw the potential buyers' attention to lotions, tires, food, liquor, clothing, autos, and even insurance policies."

But the majority won, and judging by their strange new standard, the fantastic phallic symbolism of Dean Martin riding on a gigantic pistol in the ads for *The Silencers* would certainly qualify that film to be summarily censored.

Following the Court's criterion to its logical conclusion, then, we would also fight for the following products to be banned because of the ways in which they have been advertised:

Dunhill After Shave and Cologne, because the advertisement featured a sexy girl holding the product in her hand and saying "Give him Dunhill before I do!" — the clear implication being that competitive fornication was afoot, if not threatened adultery.

Shulton's 'Desert Flower', because the advertisement featured a man and woman with an overnight suitcase and headline which asked, "Why wait for tonight . . . aren't you a woman all day?" The copy warned, "But beware. . . Desert Flower has the power to stir up excitement."

'A Veil of Arpege' by Lanvin, because the advertisement featured a full page photograph of a shadowed nude caressing her own thigh, as the headline announced, "It's a long way from a dab behind the ears. . ."

Chrysler automobiles, because the advertisement featured a woman saying, "Don, I might. . . if you drove a Chrysler." And if there was any doubt about *that,* the copy added,

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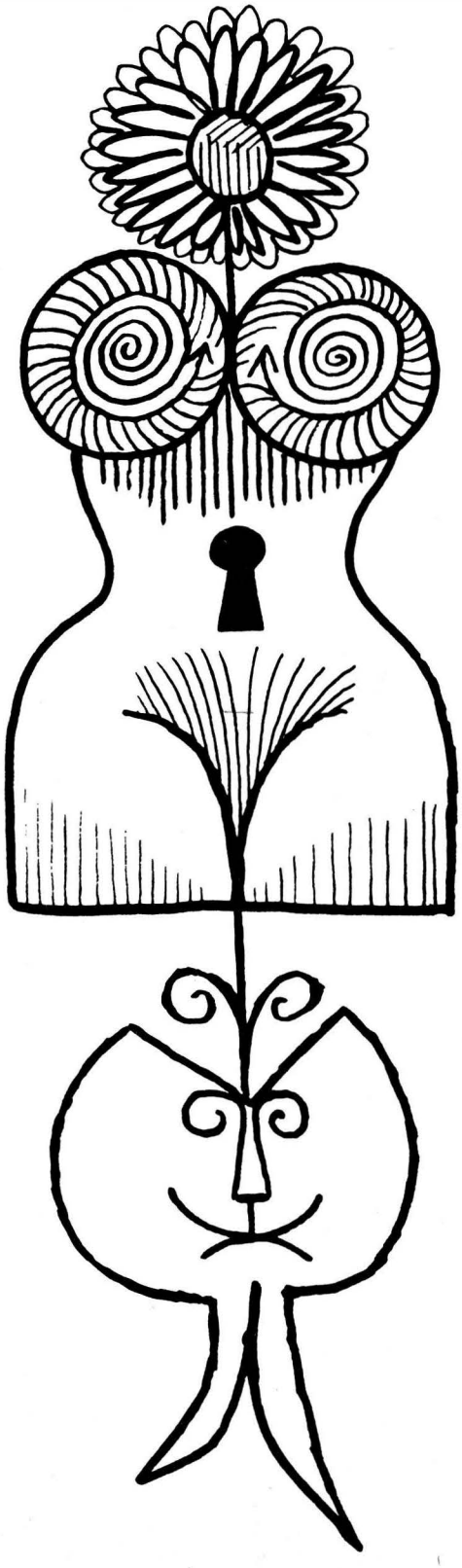
Mr. Krassner is editor of THE REALIST.



"Move up to Chrysler, Don. Your Chrysler Dealer makes it easy."

Seagram's Canadian Whiskey, because the advertisement showed a lady saying, "My husband introduced me to a really smooth Canadian last night! I've always liked Canadians, but none of them ever tasted this smooth and light. . ."

Chateau Martin Wine, because the advertisement featured a lady asking, "Had any lately?"

Not only that, but the company also manufactured and distributed buttons asking this same question. It was posed on radio, television and billboards that gave a good many drivers a dangerous double-take.

In *Madison Avenue* magazine, a columnist called Simple Simon asked:

"Was the double meaning intentional? Please let's not play games. The real meaning must have been as crystal clear to those who wrote and approved this advertising as it now is to those who read it. This is a carefully planned appeal to the prurient leanings in us all. It will get attention and it will work.

"Now, dear adman, the question is not how you regard pornography. You may, like Simple Simon, thoroughly enjoy a ribald novel, play, or movie, done with taste by talent. But the question is what you think of pornographic *advertising,* done with questionable taste and — the most important distinction — exposed to every man, woman, and child who tunes in TV or radio, or who passes a poster.

"Simple Simon insists that pornographic advertising must be rooted out at its earliest stages before it brings dishonor to us all. And let us begin by calling it by its rightful name. This is *advertising smut.* Those who are connected with it must ask themselves if it is the way they want to earn their living."

Well, Simple Simon may say no, but he's worried about the image of the profession, whereas I'm concerned with consistency of repression. If he is aroused by these ads in the course of his righteous approach, he is unintentionally satirizing the whole irrational foundation on which the censor unrests.

But Sam Roth spent years in jail, and now that he's out Ralph Ginzburg is going to take his place, while Harold Robbins goes on and on toying with readers and film-goers because he manages not to offend the establishment in the process.

I'm against censorship. That applies to smutty advertising as much as it applies to pandering Ginzburg.

But the least one can expect in a democracy is equal harassment under the law. T.O.

2 CANADIAN FILM MAKERS
CINEASTES CANADIENS

1 ARTHUR LAMOTHE

Arthur Lamothe: volubile, passionné, curieux des idées et des livres, également curieux des hommes, de la réalité, cherchant toujours des outils d'analyse pour la comprendre. Lisant, "pour se délasser", Bachelard, Jung et Raymond Aron pendant qu'il prépare le tournage de *La Neige a fondu sur la Manicouagan.* Ce n'est pas prétention de sa part d'affirmer que "des sujets de films, je peux en imaginer un tous les jours." En même temps réalistement préoccupé de se donner, de donner aux metteurs en scène québécois, les moyens de réaliser quelques uns au moins de ses, de leurs projets. Bien préparé à le faire par des études d'économie politique à l'Université de Montréal entreprises après avoir été, en France, cultivateur, au Canada, bûcheron, vendeur de frigidaires, etc. Aujourd'hui, metteur en scène, producteur: *Les Bûcherons de la Manouane, de Montréal à la Manicouagan, la Neige a fondu sur la Manicouagan,* et *Poussière sur la Ville*, qui sort à Montréal.

Provenant d'une discussion avec Michel Euvrard.

Ce qui est essentiel, c'est d'obtenir la possibilité de faire des films, et de ce point de vue, quelles que soient les difficultés, la situation est meilleure aujourd'hui qu'elle ne l'était il y a quelques années. Après *l'Homoman,* J.P. Lefèbvre a réussi à faire *le Révolutionnaire*, et en ce moment il tourne deux films; quand aujourd'hui on voit *l'Homoman* et *le Révolutionnaire* ensemble, ils s'éclairent l'un par l'autre; de voir l'un on comprend mieux l'autre et vice-versa. Il y a quelques années, Guy Borremans a fait *La Femme Image*, qui aurait dû être son *Homoman*, c'est à dire le premier d'une série de films, mais Borremans n'a pas eu à l'époque la possibilité de réaliser *SES* films.

. . . Le roman de *Poussière sur la ville* était un mélodrame réaliste; par souci anti-théâtral, pour éviter le style du théâtre de boulevard, je l'ai volontairement tiré vers la tragédie, ramassé en trois actes, et j'ai organisé à l'intérieur de chaque

2 JEAN-CLAUDE LABRECQUE

Jean-Claude Labrecque has been a cameraman for the past 10 years. Four of those years were spent at the National Film Board, where he directed his first documentary, *60 Cycles,* an alternately flashy and rhythmic colour impression of the June 1965 cyclist tour of the St. Lawrence, which has won awards both in Canada and abroad. He recently left the Board and is currently director of photography on *A Great Big Thing,* a feature film being shot in Montreal. He is also directing his own experimental film, tentatively titled *Testing 1000.*

Here, in conversation with Richard Notkin, he discusses various aspects of his work and talks of some of the technical advances and innovations that resulted in the success of 60 Cycles?

Q.— What is this new experimental film that you have started?

A.—To give you a brief idea: it is a film which starts on a normal working day in the city, with everyone moving around. We feel the heat of the day getting stronger, we see people slowing down and starting to leave the city, jamming the bridges to get out. Fire develops. Panic sets in. At the end of the film a Gemini rocket (which we will film) is preparing to leave: it is the only escape from the heat.

Q.—Is this film the result of some of the experiments carried out in 60 Cycles?

A.—Yes. I found I could go further in experimenting with the effects of various lenses on heat. For example, we found out how heat waves can be seen coming off the road on a hot day. (We will be using a 1700mm lens in addition to the others being used in the film.) We first noticed the effect in a shot in *60 Cycles* where the cyclists are approaching the camera way off in the distance. With everything telescoped, it produced a unique effect. Notice how, on the right of the line of cyclists (they were on a straight road seven miles long), the telephone poles seem to be a narrow

acte des mouvements, au sens musical; l'éclairage, chaque plan ont été conçus, chaque mouvement de caméra pensé en fonction d'une idée de l'ensemble, de la succession des mouvements, de cette composition musicale que je cherchais.

. . . Les deux-tiers du film sont tournés dans un appartement; je voulais imposer l'existence d'un logis, la couleur de l'air de ce logis; le film se passe à Thetford Mines, et je n'ai pas montré la mine, et la poussière du titre on ne la voit pas, mais l'appartement est un tunnel, une caverne: il est la mine que je ne montre pas, on y respire cette poussière qui n'est nulle part visible. Il est cela, on respire cette poussière, si j'ai réussi. L'émotion n'est pas exprimée par le jeu des acteurs, car ce n'est pas du théâtre que le cinéma est le plus proche, mais de la musique, de la poésie, de la peinture. C'est Miron, ou Chamberland, c'est le noir d'une toile de Borduas qui excitent en moi l'esprit d'émulation et me donnent envie de travailler.

. . . C'est moi qui ai fait le montage de *Poussière sur la ville*; je n'ai pas eu de difficultés car j'avais mis en scène en fonction du film terminé. Au montage j'ai retrouvé le dépouillement du roman; les préoccupations sociales que j'avais demandé à André Langevin, l'auteur, de rendre plus explicites, les références à la grève d'Asbestos qu'il avait ajoutées pour actualiser le roman, ont presque toutes disparu. Naturellement elles sont là, mais en filigrane: ce n'est pas en effet l'inclusion délibérée d'éléments politiques et sociaux explicites dans le scénario qui, dans la situation actuelle du Québec, suffit à faire une oeuvre utile. De même, lorsque M. Lévesque dit: "Attaquons-nous d'abord aux problèmes économiques et sociaux, les problèmes culturels et nationaux seront ensuite plus faciles à régler . . .", il met la charrue avant les boeufs. Il ne serait d'ailleurs pas plus juste de dire: "Envoyons les Gaspésiens", par exemple, "à l'école": il faudrait faire d'abord que les Gaspésiens sentent que la Gaspésie a un avenir, qu'ils pourront y faire leur vie; il y a d'autres façons d'étudier que d'aller à l'école! Autrement dit, il y a interférence entre les différents ordres de problèmes, et tout doit aller de pair. Il ne servirait à rien d'administrer des remèdes économiques à une société qui n'a pas atteint un développement intellectuel suffisant, qui n'est pas adulte, qui reste par exemple dominée par des tabous, dont la conscience nationale s'incarne dans des mythes dépassés. Il faudrait que le Québec réussisse à se saisir comme une communauté autrement que dans le passé, par rapport au passé, c'est à dire d'une façon négative, exclusive; les artistes, les intellectuels ont un rôle à jouer dans cette prise de conscience, mais ceux qui forment "l'élite", "l'intelligentsia" officielle, proclamée et reconnue comme telle par eux-mêmes, sont de véritables émigrés de l'intérieur: ils se sont coupés

fence. In reality, there is 180 feet between each pole.

Q.—What will Testing 1000 *cost to produce?*

A.—Well, you can figure $3500 per minute and the film will be between 10 and 15 minutes long.

Q.—Did you think 60 Cycles *would turn out as well as it did?*

A.—No. It was real swinging film; done for the fun of it. We never thought it would go so far. The NFB has done an excellent job publicizing it. I was very happy about its reception.

Q.—What were some of the experiments you tried in its filming?

A.—We used Eastman colour and had three telephoto lenses (1000, 600, and 300mm) on Arriflex cameras with an Angenieux zoom 25 — 250. We had 2 operators, 2 assistants, one racing-car driver and one business manager. The opening shot, which we were discussing, was recorded by the three cameras. In the end, we only used the sequence shot with the 1000mm lens. This was done so as not to break the rhythm, since the three sequences gave different speeds to the racers and varied the rhythm of the "heat waves" which are so noticeable in the film.

In the sequences where cyclists seem to fly through the air: a platform was built (5 feet high, 6 wide, and 5 in length). On the platform, a window was cut out 3 feet by 3 feet and specially-treated glass plate was installed. This was strong enough to hold two men and their bicycles. At first the cyclists did not want to try it: this sequence was shot on the day preceding the start of the race.

For the sequence shot from the level of the bicycle wheel hub (to show the race from that viewpoint): a long metal spike was driven through the hub of one bicycle wheel and centred in such a way that 2" of the spike protruded on either side of the hub. An Arri camera was hooked onto one side and a battery was mounted on the other to balance. The total installation added 30 lbs to the front wheel of this special bike. One of the cyclists who had dropped out of the race was hired to ride it. Two days of training were necessary for him to finally balance these weights. A button on the handle-bar controlled the camera, which had a 200' magazine.

Q.—As a cameraman, do you prefer working with actors or non-actors?

A.—Well, there is a big difference. Professional actors may ask for a certain kind of lighting. For example in the film we are doing now, the lead actor Rene Santoni wants to see how the scene is being shot so he can react in a certain way. He may actually sit there and analyse the scene from

de "pays réel", de la majorité de la société québécoise. Mais ce sont eux qui occupent les postes dans les organismes culturels officiels (Radio-Canada, etc). . . . Au contraire, Vigneault, Gilles Groulx, Jean-Marc Piotte et l'équipe de *Parti-Pris,* Ducharme, ne se sont pas séparés de la société: baignant dans le milieu québécois, ils donnent voix à un fournillement d'idées, de sentiments, de passions, et amorcent ainsi un mouvement nécessaire.

. . . Pour en revenir à *Poussière*: j'avais donc un scénario, un dialogue écrits. Ils me fournissent un cadre, une armature, grâce auxquels il devient possible d'utiliser les événements qui se présentent inopinément au cours du tournage. C'est ainsi que, René Lévesque ayant tenu à Thetford Mines une conférence de presse à laquelle assistaient le maire et tous les notables de la ville, je leur ai demandé de refaire la conférence de presse et je l'ai tournée avec eux tenant leur propre rôle et avec Guy Sanche jouant le sien. De même, il y a eu un incendie pendant le tournage, et j'ai improvisé à la lumière des flammes des scènes jouées par les acteurs mis en situation, après quoi, à partir des rushes de ces scènes, il a fallu inventer de nouvelles séquences en fonction de l'incendie. Les événements réels sont ainsi utilisés, intégrés à l'oeuvre. Je ne fais pas du "cinéma-vérité"; je cherche à réussir une stylisation du réel.

. . . C'est, je crois, un film profondément canadien, et ce caractère ne l'aura pas empêché d'être le premier film canadien à obtenir un contrat de distribution internationale: la maison Pathé, distributrice dans 46 pays, assure en effet en tout cas sa sortie à Paris; en même temps, à la livraison du film, elle versera sa participation à la production.

. . . En tournant: quand je l'ai fait, alors que peut-être, matériellement, le tournage n'était pas prêt, et qu'il allait falloir attendre peut-être longtemps pour que le film soit terminé et distribué, j'ai pris de gros risques, mais c'était à ce moment là ou jamais, au moins, le film existe. Maintenant, après deux ans, il va sortir. Si je n'en attends pas personnellement un gros profit financier, j'en attends la possibilité financière de faire d'autres films: tout va dépendre de l'exploitation de *Poussière.* Je compte en tout cas davantage sur des participations de Paris ou de New York que sur celle des industriels ou du capital québecois: lorsque les frères Brillant ont décidés

that side of the camera. But I usually have to follow a non-actor more closely because you are not always sure where they are going to move, and usually, working with non-actors, the film is improvised as they go. You never film the same scene twice in the same way. In *A Tout Prendre,* for example, we wanted to film different possibilities. *A Great Big Thing* is more scripted and we just follow the script.

Q.—Which do you prefer?

A.—I prefer more variation of course, because you never know what's going to happen. Sometimes, for example, someone will appear in a street scene and the actor will start talking to him. We will continue to film it, even though it's not in the script, and if it turns out to be an interesting conversation we might include it in the final version of the film.

Q.—Can a cameraman have a style of his own that can be recognized as, say, a painter's style is recognized?

A.—Yes, you can. Di Venanzo or Godard's cameraman Raoul Coutard . . . his style is available light, soft light, hand-held. Some other styles which are older or more classical are still beautiful. If a director wanted that kind of lighting, I could give it to him, but I would try to convince him otherwise.

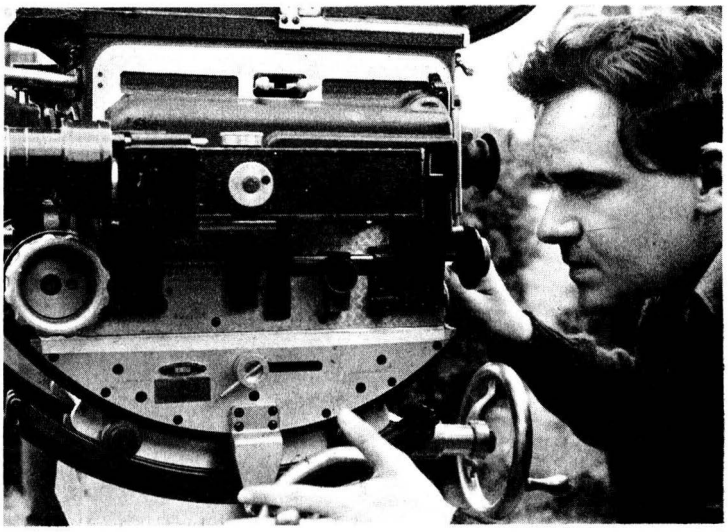
Q.—What do you eventually want to do?

A.—I want to direct, I guess. Everybody has their own feature film that they want to direct. In the meantime: documentaries or little experimental films like *Testing 1000.*

Q.—What about the cost of the feature film being done here? And do we have to make them in colour?

A.—Well, *A Great Big Thing* is being done for $300,000, but you could actually make a feature for $150,000 and that would be sufficient enough. It's funny about colour, but I think yes, because if the Americans put on the advertisements "Panavision Color" and the lettering is bigger than the names of the actors, well it is important. It's cash in the box-office.

Q.—So now it seems harder to make a black



d'investir de l'argent dans la production d'un film, ils ont financé *Le Coup de Grâce;* peut-être "parce qu'il y avait des vedettes". Et *Le Coup de Grâce* n'a pas été, et ne sera sans doute, distribué. *Poussière* n'a pû finalement être réalisé que grâce à des amis de Radio-Canada, parmi lesquels Guy Joussemet et Réal Benoit.

. . . L'important, pour moi, toujours, c'est de faire des films, d'être à même de réaliser des projets—parce que les projets des films, ce n'est pas cela qui manque.

. . . Qu'ils se réalisent dépend maintenant de l'accueil qui sera fait à *Poussière,* mais plus généralement de l'évolution de l'industrie cinématographique canadienne. Or, l'industrie cinématographique canadienne, et à plus forte raison la québecoise, est un cas particulier d'une situation globale: le Canada est un pays qui est arrivé au stade de la consommation de masse avant d'avoir pû se donner les structures économiques d'une production de masse. Nous ne produisons pas nous-même les objets que nous consommons, et pas plus les films que les voitures, et nous faisons des émissions de télévision avant d'avoir des films.

. . . Ce que je souhaite dans ces conditions pour l'avenir du cinéma canadien? Que les organismes officiels, l'état, Radio-Canada par exemple, fassent plus que recevoir gentiment et écouter avec bienveillance les producteurs et les réalisateurs; qu'ils se mettent sérieusement à chercher les moyens de développer le cinéma ici; qu'ils prennent enfin conscience que le rôle de l'état dans le domaine audiovisuel est bien davantage de développer la recherche fondamentale (et dans mon esprit, la réalisation d'un film comme *le Chat dans le Sac,* c'est de la recherche fondamentale) que de diriger des entreprises de spectacle, de "show-business". Le cinéma est plus qu'un spectacle et qu'un instrument de prestige; il a un rôle à jouer dans la conscience qu'une société doit prendre d'elle —même pour devenir une véritable communauté, car il peut et doit être, pour ceux qui le font et ceux qui le regardent, un processus affectif de découverte, le plus extraordinaire moyen de mener de pair l'élargissement de connaissance et celui de l'univers affectif, de rendre l'univers affectif plus intelligent, et pour reprendre la définition de Godard, "d'y voir clair dans la caverne de Platon, grâce à la lumière de Cézanne!" T.O.

and white film if you want to get your money back.

A.—Yes. Although it is still possible, because you cannot use colour in all films, and if you have something to say, it might be much better in black and white than in colour.

Q.—Do you like using 35 hand-held, colour, cinéma vérité style or do you worry about it, costing as it does $1 a foot?

A.—I like it. You have the Arri 35, which is a stable camera. For example, in this film I do a hand-held shot outdoors with a 9mm lens, following the actor as he walks down a long flight of cement stairs. It should be an interesting shot.

Q.—You enjoy working with lenses at their extremes, such as the very wide angle 9mm lens or the immense telephoto of 1700mm.

A.—Yes, I enjoy it very much. I enjoy the experimentation that is involved — immensely.

Q.—Why, with your success at the Board, did you leave?

A.—I left because after 3 or 4 years you become a bit tired of doing five films at once or the contrary, none at all. I will go back from time to time, but only on contract. I enjoyed it there, but it was better to leave and to do something different — like I am doing now.

FILMOGRAPHY OF JEAN-CLAUDE LABRECQUE. As director of photography, unless otherwise noted. In order of release.

1958: **Les Prévoyants du Canada** (director).
1961: **Pee-Wee sur Glace; Kronos; Sautapic.**
1962: **Le Pantin; Les Apprentis; A Tout Prendre; Natation; Pattes Mouillées; Un Air de Famille.**
1963: **De Montréal à Manicouagan; Un Jeu si Simple; Solange dans nos Campagnes; Il y eut un Soir, Il y eut un Matin; Mémoire en Fête; Bonsoir Monsieur Champagne.**
1964: **Le Chat dans le Sac; 60 Cycles** (director); **Centenaire de l'Ile du Prince-Edouard.**
1965: **Antonioni** (Italy); **Grama; La Vie Heureuse de Léopold Z; Images d'un Concours; Pas de Vacances pour les Idoles; Notes for a film about Donna and Gail; Intermède** (director). T.O.

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The SCRIPT CONFERENCE

by Noel Moore

Drawings by James Buchanan

A limbo time for the mushroom people — this Fall of the vinyl fetish, as the teeny bopper phenomenon moves inexorably from pimply pubescence to adenoidal adolescence. Great grinning medics slavering greedily in their slipped discotheques as they reap the green harvest of obese obsolescence trying to keep up with the go-go generation.

Philistine packs baying in Parliament and surly mutterings in the shrubberies of suburbia.

Zilch pacing his office on the tenth floor of the Radio Canada Building, slicing the air with the pale scimitar of his nose.

The O'Hara watering his booze rosettes with sweat, exuding ectoplasm of inspiration.

Ex-Cathedra statements from Zilch ad urbe O'Hara.

"The documentary is dead. *Nobody Waved Goodbye — Phoebe — 8 1/2,* it's all over for the talking heads bit!"

Script landing in wastepaper basket with thud. O'Hara, a cat with shades in way out weeds, begins to rally.

Calm cool Celt and harassed Hebrew in tense tableau in white walled room.

"Nobody said Hello . . . everybody said get lost. Are there no values left? Is nothing sacred? We must return to our origins, to the antique way. The Lonely Boy bit. Pinnacle of success. Screaming fans and solitude of sex symbol. Voice over on wild tape." O'Hara filling in the hills and valleys while ideas come to fore.?

Zilch's nose an S.A.M. homing in on the infra-red of O'Hara's inspiration.

"Dig . . .Paul Anka . . . National Film Board . . . great approach. International awards. Ideas . . . give . . . give."

"Lorne Greene . . . lonely man bit . . . pinnacle of success. Intercuts pre-Ponderosa — post-Ponderosa. All alone in great ranchouse on pearl grey rug. Sadness in eyes . . . Canadian angle."

Zilch nodding. "Dig-dig-dig. Canadian angle — pinnacle of success — alone with millions. No horse in garage. So what!"

White hot flash of pure illumination hitting O'Hara.

"Lassie — Canadian relatives. Pinnacle of success. Loneliness of top. Trapped by corporate image. Lonely dog."

Zilch leaping up with great cry. Hugging the O'Hara.

"Great stuff — keep it coming. This is wonderful. This is fantastic. Youth as well. The teen image."

O'Hara taking the initiative. Using the verbal rhythm method to bridge an unpregnant pause, knocking the Nike off course with parabolic mental manoeuvers.

"This is the loneliest dog in the world. Lassie's not a she. It's a he. Can't you just see it — packs of flacks preceding it everywhere. Got to be careful what he eats. No free plugs for Dr. Ballard. This dog is a corporation. Employs thousands."

Zilch latching on, pacing the floor as O'Hara fills in the details.

"Private eyes, maybe police dogs disguised as cairn terriers to keep the bitches at bay. Can't have a scandal. That's always in the contract."

Zilch giving little leaps, ordering coffee by phone and shouting to Denyse Filion to come in and see what's happening. Dignified little waltz with O'Hara.

"And the studio picks up the tab. Dig man — dig. Ideas . . . more more. Continue."

"This time we throw the nouvelle vague out the window. We're going to get right inside that dog. Follow it around on a typical day. Get inside its brain. Interior monologue on wild tape."

Zilch shouting down the corridor. Assembling the multitude. Denyse and others crowding in.

Initially a newspaperman and editor, Mr. Moore has led a chequered career in Canadian films and television (including such programs as "701", "Let's Face It", and "20/20") for the past seven years.

All move to boardroom on twelfth floor. O'Hara — looking inspired. Dignified and aloof. Lost in thought. Ring of faces pointed like radar dishes at O'Hara, picking up the message. O'Hara turning the transistor side of his brain up to pick impulses from the ether.

An inspired asterisk — dominating the table from the top. Feeding the probing tendrils of all those heads into the O'Hara contract socket. Zilch clamping teeth. Banging fists on table.

"More . . . more . . . keep it coming."

"We put the camera right inside that mutt's head. Establishing shots through sunglasses. Sure they got special sunglasses for properties like this. Those eyes are insured by Lloyds. Opening shot, shows them all misted up or maybe some raindrops spotting them. The long eyelashes blink in bewilderment. Hand comes into focus. Removes them and polishes them. Long shot of flack's face. Close up of boots."

Zilch having a haemorrhage of teeth all over lower jaw. Beams and little chuckles.

"Denyse, ring up Al. I want Al to hear what's happening here. Gee I feel like crying. I've got a lump in my throat. Denyse have you got a lump in your throat? Do I see tears Denyse? Is nothing sacred Denyse? Don't you feel anything? Dig — O'Hara. Ideas — keep 'em coming. More more."

"Match dissolve to other foot. Proletarian foot. Sturdy shoe, rough socks. Khaki drill trouser leg. Postman's."

Zilch leaning back in chair. Covering eyes with hands.

"This is too much."

Sitting forward.

"What happens . . . what happens? Don't keep us waiting."

"Lonely dog's eyes zoom in on ankle bone. Can't touch. No bite. Corporate image. Fan letters."

"Is Al here? Denyse, is Al here? Is anybody listening to what's happening here? I want Ottawa and Toronto in on this. I want them to hear what we're doing. Lonely dog. Postman's ankle. Primordial instinct frustrated in interests of children. All those trusting kids. Keep it coming O'Hara. Let it come. Don't try to filter it — just let it come."

"Dolly back from ankle. Slow pan up leg to mailbag then quick zoom back to seat of pants as figure recedes in distance. Maybe a tear in lower left hand corner of eye. Misted eye shows Hollywood all misted up. Establishing shot of mound of mail."

Zilch springing up. Al quietly joining group. Zilch swallowing hard. Pointing mutely at O'Hara.

"Al. You gotta hear this. This is so me Al. We're putting Montreal on the map Al. Go on man."

"Eyelashes blink bravely. Now we show lonely street. That great big boulevard with all those telephone poles and fire hydrants. The hydrants appear ten feet high and somehow beckoning. They're crying out to Lonely Dog, sighing like the pines in a cowboy movie."

Zilch interjecting.

"I want dynamic realism here. I want truth. I want closeups of the bases of those poles. They're going to scream but I want real pee stains on those poles and hydrants. Al, I'll resign if you try to water down this film. Real pee stains."

Al making placatory gestures. Zilch ready to die for the cause. O'Hara following up.

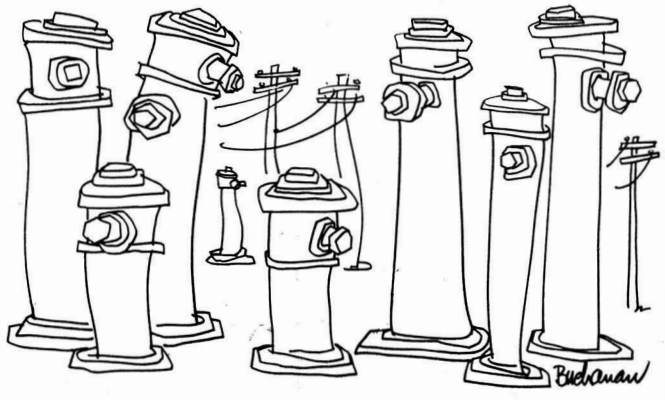
"And in the distance an Alsatian having a ball . . . on every pole."

Group creativity taking over. Denyse piping up. "And then he sees her walking down the steps. A poodle. She's there and she's not there. Neither of them are sure whether they are there. We use the misty eye sequence here again."

Zilch pointing accusing finger. Choked voice of admonition.

"Denyse . . . O'Hara and me are making this film. Denyse . . . are there no values left Denyse? Is nothing sacred? . . . don't you believe in anything? What about the Queen, Denyse? . . . what about the legion, all those fine boys who fought to make a better world Denyse? Denyse . . . don't interrupt. We'll discuss bi-culturalism later. Keep it coming O'Hara. This boy's brain is a fine instrument."

O'Hara diversifying the group think. Handy



for lobbying later.

"Denyse has a point there Larry. The Marienbad angle would be great, but after all we can't afford any clichés or anything like that at the moment. We get to the love scene later. But first of all we have to show the spartan discipline. The iron self control required from a dog in the public eye."

"How . . . tell us how O'Hara. Don't keep us waiting. Denyse I've got this boy on contract. We have a verbal agreement. What is it O'Hara?"

"The camera is right inside the mouth. Down behind the gloccola. Special effects give us the teeth. We see they are capped. We see the bridgework. Then we shoot out over the tongue, through the teeth and latch on to the bone on the long shot."

"Don't stop now O'Hara. We get the shot from the larynx. We see the bone. It has a blue ribbon on it and a card. From the Yellowknife Fan Club. They're stuck with huskies up there. This is the human interest bit. All those lonely Eskimos."

O'Hara taking a deep breath.

"Slow dolly in on bone. Delicate drooling. Tongue reaches out lovingly. Bring up music. Flack's hand comes down and removes bone. Cut to view from eye. We see red for a moment. Then clear. They've been shooting an advertisement. Big pat on head. No bone. Mood music."

Zilch looking exhausted — spent.

"This is too much. It can't keep up like this." Stage whisper.

"What about the love bit."

"We have to finish with the discipline bit first. We see the cat. It's colored. It's got an NAACP collar band. It spits in Lassie's eye and walks away with the bone."

"Dig . . . there's good and bad amongst them, We don't jump on the bandwagon. We're independent. Warts and all. It's not our problem. But the love, man, the love."

O'Hara taking the plunge.

"That's from the interior too. Meeting on the steps. It's a dachshund. Quaint continental bark. Rendezvous at discreet out of the way motel kennel. Closeups of noses touching. And then."

Zilch's hoarse whisper.

O'Hara trying desperately.

"Inside . . . yes right inside. Dark, indiscernible. Vague movements. Flashing kaleidoscope of colors. Ravel's Bolero rises in background with special sound effects. Great dignity and beauty. Lassie's noble head resting in utter contentment on shoulder of bitch. Camera pans fields and meadows and symbolically peopled landscape. Beautiful symphonic music. Show birds and bees and everything doing it . . . symbolically."

Zilch pounding table.

"And then . . . and then?"

O'Hara rising to the challenge.

"The payoff."

"What payoff? Don't stop now man. What payoff?"

"Lassie leaps up with a great anguished howl. All the pain and hurt and anger in the world is contained in that howl. We hear the ticking. It grows louder and louder. . . ticking insanely inside Lassie's head. Long shot of Lassie scooting down Wilshire Boulevard, just a blur in the traffic. Cars braking, people shouting, studio executives having heart attacks."

O'Hara holding the balance of power. All ears and eyes trained on him. Zilch pleading.

"And then."

"Roll credits. Closeups of Lassie running. Cut back to dachshund. Ticking grows louder. Hand comes down and switches it off. It's an audioanimatronic device from the Disney Studios."

"What about Lassie? We just can't leave him running like that."

"Of course not. That's the whole point. He's back doing his stuff in the regular time slot the next week. Delayed impact. Show must go on. Brave trouper. Final music — there's no business like show business. Dig?" T.O.

"GNAWING SEXUAL HUNGER, STINGINGLY CONVEYED IN SLASHING TEMPO...ADMIRABLY WROUGHT."
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THEATRE & ENGINEERING

ten technological HAPPENINGS

by Robert Russel

Attention artists!

Does the idea of a computer console frighten you? Can you cope successfully with an Aston Martin, a scuba diving outfit, a power lawnmower, infrared binoculars, a geiger counter; one man helicopter or personal submarine? How do you measure up when confronted with an electric toothbrush?

If you've been reading your *Village Voice* you have probably heard about last month's "two cultures" show in a Manhattan armory: nine evenings of Theatre & Engineering, ten brief happenings where dancers, painters and other artists collaborated with the bright boys of Bell Labs (Lasers, Transistors, Singing Computers, 3D Computer movie-makers, etc.) at that Armory on 25th Street where in 1913, modern art hit america. To underline the historical importance of this mating of the two cultures, signed posters were selling at $200 (if anyone was buying). On the other hand, beautifully elaborate programs were selling for a quarter. The place seats about 1700 at $3 a head, and although you could buy a ticket on the day of the show, by 9 p.m., as the lights dimmed, they were generally sold out. On the other hand, the hall was usually half empty by the time proceedings ground to a halt around midnight or so.

Getting back to the *Village Voice,* if Jonas Mekas likes it you know it must have been bad: "It was of no importance to me at all how many speakers failed to work at the Cage performance: it was a great evening anyway. The failures of Steve Paxton's things were more aesthetically (and in many other ways) enjoyable than some of the successes I've seen elsewhere. Or the Whitman piece. I was told later that two or three projectors didn't work, that the video cameras didn't work. Who cares?" About half the audience walked out before it ended, the two nights I was there. And not just because things didn't work. Things finally worked pretty well by that last Sunday night late in October, and they still walked out.

There was a bouncing sound source that didn't bounce and the sound didn't come from it, anyway. But then there were those bubbles coming up from the floor and floating up to the armory rafters: they worked. And so did the silver zeppelin that cruised freely around the ropes and balconies under radio control. The pillow fight from the silent electric golfcart was great. And people loved the parade with the Mao Tse-Tung and Bob Hope posters that continued onto the screen with movies, and an exploding bust of LBJ. Somehow this was a committed happening. New left wing chaos. Should have been like a Marx brothers film, inspired madness and all, but it dragged like a tranquillized panda, soporific exotica.

The actors and dancers were very ill at ease, so they wore looks of earnest endeavour that would have done credit to a mountie at a royal church parade. None of the actors played characters, they weren't people relating to machines, they were bloody symbols. Bloodless symbols.

A tennis game with the rackets wired for sound. Each time they managed to hit the ball, an 80 decibel twang was transmitted by FM to the PA system and the twenty loudspeakers in the hall, and one of the lights went out. When it was finally dark 500 people milled onto the court, and we watched them move about by infrared TV on giant screens. Finally, after a series of ritualized actions (they all took out their hand-

Robert Russel has directed films for both the CBC and the National Film Board. A well-known critic, he is consulting on a number of cinematic projects and is presently in the process of establishing what is described as a "current information retrieval service."

IN COLLABORATION WITH THE SWEDISH FILM INSTITUTE
THE MONTREAL INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL PRESENTS A

SWEDISH
FILM WEEK

NOVEMBER 18-24 **VENDOME CINEMA**
(PLACE VICTORIA)

Friday, Nov. 18, 9:30/Saturday, Nov. 19, 5:30, 7:30
MY SISTER, MY LOVE by Vilgot Sjoman, Fr. s.-t.
Forbidden love in the 18th century, with Bibi Andersson

Saturday, Nov. 19, through to Thursday, Nov. 24, 1:30
A KINGDOM IN THE WILDS by Jan Lindblad, Eng. s.-t.
A magnificent film about bird life

Saturday, Nov. 19, through to Monday, Nov. 21, 3:30
SWEDISH PORTRAITS by Tage Danielsson, Fr. commentary
Hellzapoppin' Swedish-style

Saturday, Nov. 19, 9:30/Sunday, Nov. 20, 5:30, 7:30
THE HUNT by Yngve Gamlin, Fr. s.-t.
An unusual triangle in an unusual place

Sunday, Nov. 20, 9:30/Monday, Nov. 21, 5:30, 7:30
RAVEN'S END by Bo Widerberg, Eng. s.-t.
Acclaimed as the best Swedish film for many a year

Monday, Nov. 21, 9:30/Tuesday, Nov. 22, 5:30, 7:30
THE SERPENT by Hans Abramson, Eng. s.-t.
Horror and anguish in the Swedish barracks

Tuesday, Nov. 22, through to Thursday, Nov. 24, 3:30
GUILT by Lars Gorling, Eng. s.-t.
Man's fear of getting involved

Tuesday, Nov. 22, 9:30/Wednesday, Nov. 23, 5:30, 7:30
MY HOME IS COPACABANA by Arne Sucksdorff, Fr. s.-t.
The "carioca" humour of child outlaws in Brazil

Wednesday, Nov. 23, 9:30/Thursday, Nov. 24, 5:30, 7:30
ADVENTURE STARTS HERE by Jorn Donner, Eng. s.-t.
A girl drifts in the modern world, with Harriet Andersson

Thursday, Nov. 24, 9:30
TO GO ASHORE by Tage Danielsson, Eng. s.-t.
The funniest Swedish film-farce in the world

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kerchiefs at the same time and wiped their brows), they disappeared, and the lights came up, and we had another one of those 35 minute intermissions while new technological wonders were wheeled into place.

In other numbers, we watched dancers sliding across the stage on robot platforms or miniature hovercraft: expressionless ghosts trapped by their own pretensions or good intentions. One solo number showed us an actor laying out, one by one, a series of a hundred pink sheets on the floor, while the speakers treated us to a cacophonous melange of his body signals: his heartbeat, his EEG, his alpha rhythms, the sounds of his moving eyeballs, or his breathing, each one separately transmitted by FM and mishmashed senselessly together in Bell's electronic studios at one end of the floor.

This isn't a reactionary complaint. I'm as interested in the man-machine relationship as any artist or filmmaker can be. In fact, I flew five hundred miles down and back just to see the show. I thought the best of the happening people (John Cage, Bob Rauschenberg, for instance), together with the Bell Lab engineers, were a winning team. With Bell's John Pierce and Max Matthews as advisors, what stronger scientific support had any artist the right to expect? But there was no understanding, no feeling for the technology, everyone looked like a dude on their first visit to the ranch. Beneath it all was a spiritual awkwardness that communicated itself to all but the most enthusiastic spectators. And as for the marriage of technology and art, you can see better in any department store Santa Claus window in Toronto or Montreal.

Or in a James Bond movie. Or in my favorite, *Our Man Flint.* Here the "artists" know how to invest their gimmicks with meaning and symbolism, and we enjoy watching our hero cope with flying belts, submarine oxygenators, personal radar sets or whatever the 1984 boys throw at us. With unruffled calm. Unflappable James, that's us.

For the James Bond people understand what the Armory artists didn't: the machinery doesn't need window dressing. The secret is clear: the machinery itself is poetry, and needs no gilding. A good sports car, or a computer programmed to play chess or run a company or diagnose, that's art and beauty enough. A machine is thought made form. And if it works, and the world can use it, it becomes an expression of our time and our society just as surely and profoundly as if it were a great symphony or film. As McLuhan puts it, the medium IS the message, or as Samuel Cunard put it a century earlier, getting there is half the fun. T.O.

REVIEWS

THE FESTIVALS **23-25**

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DRAWINGS BY ANDRE CLAVEL

FESTIVAL 1

NEW YORK

On Friday evening, Sept. 16 the Fourth New York Film Festival screened *Accattone* in the Philharmonic Hall of the Lincoln Center. The programme note said it was "a modern tragedy and an indictment of the affluent society — in Italy, or anywhere else."

Twenty concrete yards through the fountains and across the piazza, the same evening saw the Met Opera swish into its new plate-glass palace with Samuel Barber's all-American opener *Antony and Cleopatra.* At a measly $200 a shot, the best seats just went whoosh: the latenight rag parade turned up Mayor Lindsay and Rudolf Bing and President Marcos of the Philippines and the First Lady and lots ofuncomfortably black-tied wombat-eared wardbosses unsheathing election-year-culture-oriented handshakes.

"It is," said Mrs. Johnson, "the beginning of a new Golden Age."

Back to Philharmonic Hall where such certainties, alas, were nowhere to be found. Not that the 11-day meet hadn't come up with some good things. Not that the "expanded" four-man selection committee hadn't tried. God knows, it had. It saw 600 features, finally selecting 24 from 14 countries. And attendance stuck at a nice steady 84 per cent.

But. Unhappiness remained.

There's an obliquely surrealistic exchange in *Morgan* that gets close to the problem. Bernard Bresslaw's policeman chides Morgan: " 'Ere, you wanna watch it." And Morgan replies, "Yeah, but where is it?" At the New York Festival, it was difficult to find.

Most immanently, unease showed itself in Programme Director and British Film Institute's man-about-festivals Richard Roud's introductory notes in which he zeroes in on New York's heavyweight critics. They suffer, says Mr. Roud, from "the rationalistic, conceptual blinkers that afflict so many of the remains of New York intellectual society of the 30's."

In other words, they are not with it.

Right, Richard, they are not with it, says Festival Director Amos Vogel, instrumental in sponsoring, along with Mr. John Brockman, the 27-programme sideshow of "independent cinema" at the Festival. "Unless audiences, exhibitors, distributors and critics catch up with 'what's happen-

ing baby', they will be left behind," warns Mr. Vogel. And he continues: "Bellochio, Skolimowski, Forman, Teshigahara, Jancso, Bertolucci, Chytilova . . . Varda, Saura, Paradjanov. Tongue-twisters of today, they are the Life Magazine features of tomorrow."

Well now, if *that* doesn't make you want to be with it . . .

Anyway. The real ghostie at the banquet was the absence, if you see what I mean, of an official American entry. And just in the year that Mr. Jack Valenti mixed his media by moving over as Number One in the Motion Picture Association. (October was National Motion Picture Month, by the way.) The empty Festival slot was hardly filled by *The Cheat,* a 1915 Paramount "Retrospective" by — who else? — Cecil B. De Mille. (Incidentally, this retrospective business as an integral part of a festival has to be watched. There were quite a few here: Clarence Brown's 1929 Garbo *A Woman of Affairs,* a 1931 Renoir *La Chienne* and even dear old Ichikawa's *Burmese Harp* was dusted off for another twang.)

To the good things: the Czech duo of Milos Forman and Ivan Passer (*Loves of A Blonde* and *Intimate Lighting,* the latter screened at Montreal) set the Festival on its ear. And in 1967 Lincoln Center promises a complete Czech Festival. Then there was Peter Watkins' post-nuclear horror *The War Game.* (Too terrifying for Britishers, but here as the official British entry. Odd, that.) Paradjanov's Carpathian threnody, *Shadows of our Forgotten Ancestors* and a double Pasolini — *Accattone* and *Uccellacci E Uccellini.* ("If I made it in America," Pasolini told the audience, "Accattone would be a Negro. If you have a little tear, shed it.") Of the other offerings, René Allio's *La Vieille Dame Indigne,* from Brecht's wistfully ironic story, and a Bunuelish slab of Spanish reality, Carlos Saura's *The Hunt,* scored heaviest.

And so to the Wonderful World of the Jump Cut; first to sell out (ticketwise, that is) were the two Godards, *Pierrot le Fou* and *Masculin-Féminin.* (Godard's cryptic "the children of Marx and Coca-Cola" is rapidly taking on a stone tablet significance here.) And, finally, Resnais' fourth feature *La Guerre est Finie.* On this last, there's space to say only that it's a truly magnificent film, lovingly put together and hauntingly played by Yves Montand as a revolution-weary Spanish Republican underground agent and Ingrid Thulin as his sad-eyed mistress. Let me forecast that the ending of *La Guerre est Finie* will join in the archives those other famous passages as an example of what a great artist can do.

On the minus side: disappointing entries from Torre Nilson, Bresson and Varda. And from the "special events programme" some rather uneventful specialties, including "The One-Minute Movie — Screenings of television commercials, followed by discussion with two leading TV filmmakers" — no, honestly — and a "special presentation" of a new "film-oriented Theatre Piece" by a Mr. Whitman, a "leading intermedia artist" whose most recent work apparently was shown at last year's "Expanded Cinema Festival" and subsequently ran "at various off-Broadway theatres." It's called, *Prune. Flat.*

Patrick MacFadden

FESTIVAL 2
VANCOUVER

A Festival is compounded of triumphs and frustrations, mistakes and successes. Vancouver this year had its fair share of both: one can point to a remarkably stable programme (only one last-minute change necessitated) and to the 25% rise in attendance figures—or to the usual complaints of inadequate financial support and the limitations on the social side of the Festival, which failed to produce any kind of "festive" atmosphere. What there was, was excellent: but what there wasn't, was extensive. And the same duality was evident in the films: many of the shorts, especially, were very poor, and the programming often seemed haphazard; but there were always heights to counterbalance these depths.

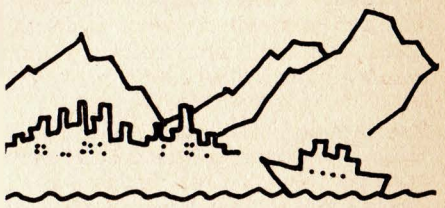
On such heights, like three wise oracles, sat the judges: Arthur Knight, author of *The Liveliest Art* and current contributor to *Playboy;* Patrick Watson of "7 Days" fame/notoriety; and Naoki Togawa, one of Japan's leading film critics and Professor of Film at Nihon University. They were one of the Festival's greatest assets: discriminating in their judgements, helpful in their suggestions, friendly and open in conversation.

But to turn to the films themselves:

The outstanding feature was, predictably, Milos Forman's *Loves of a Blonde* (which the Czechs translate as *Hello, Blondie!).* This was the opening night presentation, and was also shown again later "by public demand". It is a very attractive and often hilarious film: but its greatest merit is the balance it preserves between the tragic and comic elements of its theme. Such a poise shows rare and deep understanding in the director. It is unfortunate that one of its finest scenes is likely to fall to the censor's scissors if it ever returns to B.C.

No other film aroused such unanimous praise. Many emerged with a kind of exhausted approval, like the wildly lyrical *Shadows of Our Forgotten Ancestors,* a picture-book of Russian peasant life with some of the most extravagant camera-work you are ever likely to see. Also extravagant was Toyoda's *Illusion of Blood,* a Japanese film with a puzzling title—there is nothing illusory about the red stuff which flows in great abundance throughout this positively *liquid* ghost story. Despite beautiful colour photography and the ever-welcome presence of Nakadai, the film never totally grips: its parade of bloodshed and horrors all seems rather unnecessary, and the unavoidable comparison with *Kwaidan* is not flattering.

Also notable was the Polish *Salto,* with Zbigniew Cybulski dancing his way gaily through a surrealistic re-run of *Ashes and Diamonds.* At times the symbolism seems rather laboured or specious, but for the most part I found this a fascinating film. Director Tadeusz Konwicki's rhythms of cutting produced some nicely unnerving effects. And the film closes with the gorgeous sight of Cybulski's three-year-old son, also in dark glasses.



Two episode films attracted great attention: *Paris Vu Par* is a veritable curate's egg off a film. Everyone liked Godard, most liked Rouch, some liked Chabrol—and after that you get very esoteric. But Godard's heroine's parting shot (even unsubtitled) brought the house down. (The theatre balcony was actually condemned.) Satyajit Ray's *Kaparush Mahaparush* (The Coward and the Saint) had a limited appeal because of the lack of subtitles. (One of the two short films had French titles, the other was straight Bengali.) But Ray's prodigious talent can

overcome most barriers, and, even without appreciating the subtleties of dialogue, I could follow and thoroughly enjoy these films. "The Saint" is especially lively, with a fine touch of satire new for Ray. Also on the Indian front we had the much-vaunted *Shakespeare Wallah,* which produced mixed reactions: many enjoyed it, but I personally found it sadly disappointing.

The shorts were not, on the whole, enthralling: audiences suffered from a plethora of mediocre travelogues. But what good ones there were, were excellent, and fully deserved their awards. One thinks especially of Hugo Niebeling's dazzling *Petrol,* and Bruno Sefranka's *Ecce Homo,* a profound and beautiful picture of the human situation through religious sculpture. The CBC was also well-represented by *Mills of the Gods, Memorandum* and *Carol,* all award-winners. The judges made no award in the "short-fiction" category, but instead instituted a "student film" category, and gave awards to *Plato in America,* by New York's John Mayrogiannopoulous and *Felicia,* by California's Stuart Roe.

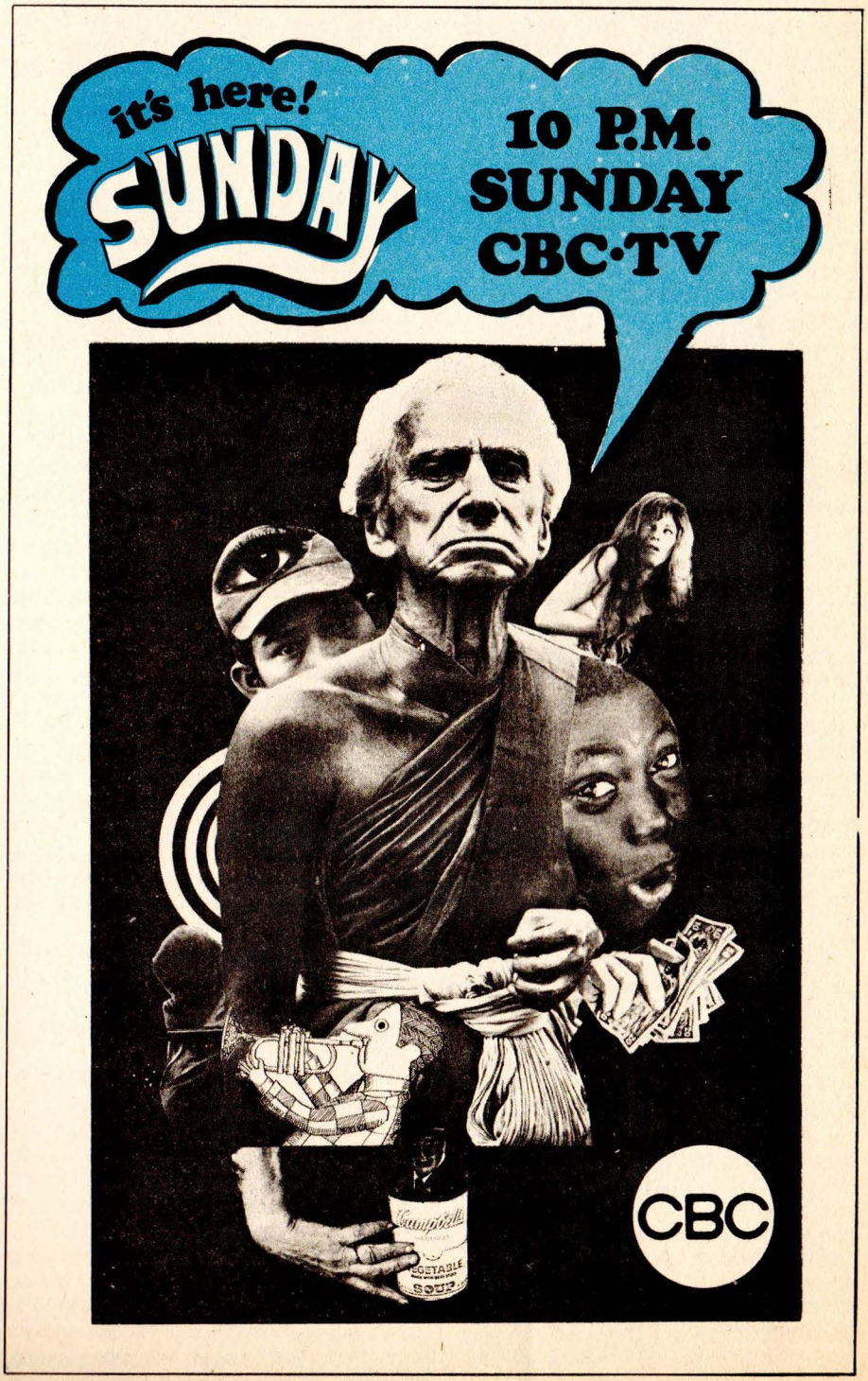
The Festival's special interest this year lay in the $1,000 Centennial Award for the best B.C. film. This went to Larry Kent's feature *When Tomorrow Dies* — which award doesn't say much for the standard of B.C. film-making. The argument is that the mere achievement of making a full-length feature in B.C. is praiseworthy: but this is Mr. Kent's third effort, and surely by now the time for patronising is past, surely we can expect more than mere existence from the film—some vestige of quality would also be welcome. The award is all the more puzzling when one considers some of the excellent short films being made in B.C. The Philip Keatley/Paul St. Pierre team did win mention for *How to Break a Quarter Horse* and *The Hunt on the Happy Anne.* There are also the experimental films of Sam Perry, or Al Sens' brilliant cartoon, *The See Hear Talk Think Dream Act Film,* which has an intellectual integrity and an inventive use of the film medium which Mr. Kent's film is nowhere near.

The B.C. Competition did provide the Festival with something unique, something that made it not just any other Festival. But this kind of competition can't happen every year. The Vancouver Festival is good, but there is plenty of room for improvement. It should become a bit less self-apologetic, and try to make itself felt more in the city of Vancouver itself. The judges left behind them some recommendations, which may well have very beneficial results next year—such points as having the judges present a week before the Festival starts: in this way greater interest can be generated in social gatherings pre-Festival, and the already-judged shorts can be programmed in a more intelligent manner. The basis of nine years is there: with a little effort and intelligent care, the Vancouver Festival could become one of the major film events of the Pacific coast.

Stephen Scobie

FESTIVAL 3
VENICE

1966 has been a bad year for movies. Over the past five years, it has normally worked out that either Cannes or Venice has had a programme that was fairly bulging with festive goodies. This year, neither managed to deliver. Partly this reflects the increasing competition for the good films — with over two hundred festivals, there are not



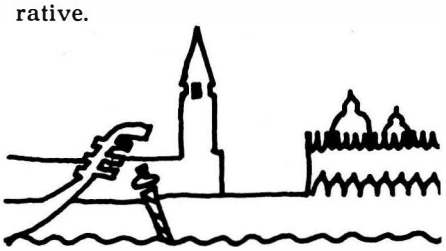
enough masterpieces to go round. And if Cannes and Venice, at the top of the pecking order, have problems in getting acceptable films, the minor festivals must be something of a nightmare.

This year, with the harvest worse than usual, there was precious little worth remembering even from the two major festivals. Cannes found only two really admirable films, Pasolini's *Uccellacci e Uccellini* and Rivette's *Suzanne Simonin, La Religieuse de Diderot,* although lurking outside the festival were the new films of Godard, Resnais and Bresson and above all the new historical film of Vittorio Cottafavi, *I Cento Cavalieri* (A Hundred Horsemen). Venice provided very much less as there is no extra-curricular activity to make up for the limitations of the selection committee.

Anyone who left the festival before the last day could well be excused for considering it a total disaster. There were minor consolations —a promising German movie, though heavily influenced by Godard, in Alexander Kluge's *Abscheid Von Gestern,* another interesting first film from Czechoslovakia in Ewald Schorm's *Everyday Courage,* some skilful and elegant camera work in Mai Zetterling's ambitious *Nattlek.* One complete success was Gillo Pontecorvo's reconstruction of *The Battle of Algiers,* but this was a sure-fire subject for a director with the technical resources and organizational ability — Pontecorvo had both and the film is fascinating, as much for the facts displayed as for the manner of filming.

The disappointment of the festival was Truffaut's new film, *Fahrenheit 451.* If it is not a disappointment on the level that *Chimes at Midnight* was at Cannes, this is only because one expects so much less from Truffaut than from Welles. In relation to his two more interesting contemporaries of the New Wave, Chabrol and Godard, Truffaut has tended to be over-valued, largely, I think, because his work is the most accessible. Shot in revolting British colour, *Fahrenheit* in a sense takes the concept which he developed in *Cahiers du Cinéma* of *la politique des auteurs* to its logical but absurd extreme of equating books with the men who wrote them. Like almost every other science fiction film it is so schematic in its values that on an intellectual level it is unexciting. As if realizing this, Truffaut has hired Hitchcock's regular composer, Bernard Herrmann and seems to have asked him to write the score the way he would for the Master. The influence of Hitchcock is evident, too, in the visuals, which even include Hitchcock's most daring optical effect, the combination of a zoom in one direction and a track in the other to alter the perspective within a shot. In Hitchcock's hands, whether in *Vertigo* or *Marnie,* the effect is quite extraordinary. Here it goes for almost nothing. Strangely enough, the same optical effect is used by another New Wave veteran, Roger Vadim, for the last shot of *La Curée,* a film in which his taste for the gratuitously decorative has got completely out of hand.

Thank heaven, then, for Roberto Rossellini who contributed the closing film of the festival, *La Prise de Pouvoir Par Louis XIV.* This is Rossellini's second film for television — the first was five hours of historical documentary called *The Age of Iron* made for Italian television. Now working with all the necessary resources and, surprisingly, in colour for French television, he tackles a straight historical narrative.



The past has always presented film directors with special problems of approach. How does one set about depicting in the cinema events that took place long before its invention? Most films of historical fiction or historical fact opt, according to budget, for costumed frolic or grandiose spectacle. The more intellectual directors often emphasize the distance between the audience and the events on the screen — in this category we have the operatic approach of Visconti's *Senso* or the fable-like simplicity of Bergman's historical films. Rossellini's approach is very different: film it as if it were actually happening.

This is the attitude which one might expect Rossellini, the realist of the '40's, to take with history, and it had already been apparent in such films as *Vanina Vanini,* which was not so much an adaptation from Stendhal as a view of the Risorgimento. Rossellini is trying in *La Prise de Pouvoir Par Louis XIV* to make the film look as it would have done if the cinema had existed in 1661 and the events portrayed were contemporary. He consistently refuses to present history as a pageant and to distort the commonplaces of the period by emphasizing the spectacle or playing up their strangeness to modern eyes. When Mazarin is dying, the sight of the doctors solemnly sniffing samples of his blood and various bodily effusions is shown as the routine which it was.

Presented in these terms, history is made real for the audience. For once, courtiers standing around aimlessly do not arrange themselves in straight lines or neat geometrical patterns, but take up more random groupings. The king is presented as a short, rather flabby figure with a cunning, if adolescent face. It is Rossellini's pupose in making the events and the people seem real, to give substance to the intrigues and the ideas behind them. If we care to draw conclusions, we are at liberty to do so.

The Rossellini method of making history meaningful to a contemporary audience contrasts with that employed by Cottafavi in *I Cento Cavalieri.* (I make no excuse for referring back to a film shown at Cannes and viewed even there by less than a dozen people: it is a fine picture worthy of a wide showing.) Cottafavi is more interested in contemporary parallels. Even his previous film, *Hercules Conquers Atlantis,* was concerned with totalitarianism and showed images of concentration camps and mass graves. *I Cento Cavalieri* is set in medieval Spain. We are shown the hostility between the merchants of the town and the peasants of the countryside and their attempts to exploit or defraud each other. All is muddle and dishonesty. Then one day the Moors arrive. They all wear neat blue uniforms, they are polite, honest and efficient, and in no time everything is running like clockwork. But as soon as the peasants become awkward, the torture begins, and the execution of hostages. The modern references punctuate the film, extending to the role of the church and the partisan activities of the peasants. It is a film of great beauty and complexity, shot by an artist who knows exactly how to fill a Cinema-Scope screen. The film ends with a battle that is visually the most striking thing I have seen on the screen this year. As the fighting progresses, and the carnage mounts, the colour slowly drains from the

screen so that at the end when almost everyone is dead, the image is completely in black and white.

The Rossellini consciously avoids visually striking effects, but it too is a great achievement. If the other fine films of the year, like the new Alain Resnais, *La Guerre est finie,* are unlikely to be missed, these no less deserving works could easily pass unshown outside the continent of Europe.

Ian Cameron

THE WILD ANGELS

Producer — Director: Roger Corman. Screenplay: Charles B. Griffith. Photography: Richard Moore. Music: Michael Curb. Editor: Monte Hellman. Pathé Colour. With Peter Fonda, Nancy Sinatra, and "members of the Hells Angels of Venice California". Released by American-International.

Roger Corman's new film *The Wild Angels* contains some of the most violent and distasteful scenes to have appeared in the cinema in recent years. It is still a decorum that scenes of extreme brutality should be implied rather than shown in detail on the screen. The camera should move to the faces of the spectators, or the actors' shadows, or cut directly to the next scene. This rule was broken recently by Hitchcock when he prolonged and emphasized the farmhouse killing in *Torn Curtain* to show the limits to which an ordinary man will go when placed in a desperate situation. We are all of us potential killers. Similarly, in *The Wild Angels* Corman lingers upon scenes of cruelty and horror. A young man shot in the back crawling agonizingly towards the camera, the striking of a woman, the beating up of a parson, and the parading of a corpse, all are held in extreme close-up. This preoccupation with violence for its own sake, which many American critics described as bad taste, is in fact the essence of a film which concerns the springs of violence and the fascist instinct in society. It is a subject which Corman treated earlier in *The* Stranger, a film about racial hatred seen, ironically, from the point of view of the oppressors. *The Wild Angels* deals with fascism as it affects young people.

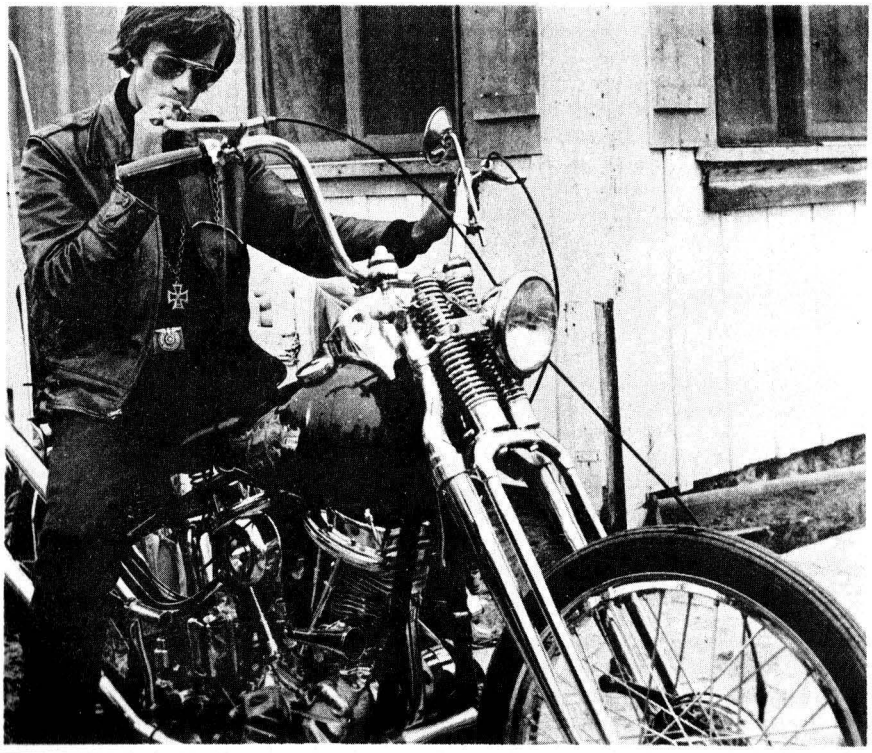
For *"The Stranger,* largely due to the limitations imposed by the budget, Corman developed a documentary style, shooting in real locations and using non-professional actors for the secondary roles. He adopts the same approach in *The Wild Angels* and concentrates more on the group than on individuals (the love interest is reduced to a minimum). The film centres upon a real life motorcycle gang from Venice, California known as Hells Angels. Their clashes with the police have the same vivid authenticity as the street meetings in *The Stranger.* The Angels dress in Nazi regalia, recognize the strict authority of a leader within the gang known as The President, and perform elaborate rituals connected with their machines. Their organization is not unlike the Ku Klux Klan. Recently they drew the attention of the newspapers when some four hundred of them invaded a small country town in full dress and colors for the funeral of one of their number killed in a knife

Corman makes the incident of the funeral the basis of his film. They are also outcasts, forming a parallel with Lucifer's revolt from heaven. Heaven in this case is the American Dream. This theme is made explicit in the church sequence where the Angels replace the cross with a swastika and the preacher accuses them of rebelling against God, choosing evil as good and good as evil. Their reply is that this choice was forced upon them by society, they were given no alternative. "We just wanted to be left alone."

The movement of the film is towards the inevitable self-destruction of the characters. One of the gang is called The Loser and the film follows the progress of his bad luck. We see him first losing his job at the oil derrick, then being shot in an attempt to decoy the police from his friends, and finally dying through a misguided attempt by the gang to rescue him from police custody. It is also suggested that they are part of a wider sickness in society as a whole. As a background to the scene between The President (Blues) and his girlfriend, in which they find their relationship is falling apart, a radio announces the latest news of the brutalities being perpetrated in the name of freedom in Vietnam and plays a record of "Crying in the Chapel".

Freedom is the one object which the Wild Angels seek from life but which they can never attain. Even when they escape from the persecution of the Law into the desert they are unable to discover their freedom. There is a scene just before a fight with a rival gang when The Loser unties a horse so that it may run free, but the animal will not move. This image is repeated at the end of the film when Blues allows himself to be taken by the police because, "There's nowhere to go".

In the opening sequence before the titles, there is a long tracking shot containing one of the main themes of the picture — the confrontation of innocence and brutality. A small child on a tricycle comes out of a front garden and rides down the sidewalk instinctively making towards the highway and danger. Suddenly the front forks of a motorcycle are thrust into the frame and the two meet — the head of the child and the wheel — on the very point of collision when the mother snatches



the child away. She scolds then kisses him and the camera follows them back to the safety of the garden. Through all their viciousness and immorality, the Wild Angels behave with the innocence and the malice of children. In all their actions there is a tension between destructiveness and tenderness. During the preacher's sermon at the funeral, some are in tears while others are jeering and heckling. The Loser rejects all values yet maintains a strict fidelity to his girl; at the point of death he complains like a child about a broken medal.

Part of the ambiguity of the film comes from its treatment of violence as comedy. In rescuing The Loser from the hospital one of the gang almost gets left behind attempting to rape a nurse. While escaping in a stolen ambulance they receive an emergency call for help over the car radio. The same character suggests that maybe they should go and answer it. The comedy lies in the characters' total ignorance of any sense of right or wrong. Corman used a similar technique in a film entitled *Bucket of Blood,* also scripted by Charles Griffith, about a young sculptor who thinks he is creating great works of art by casting the dead bodies of his models in clay. Humour serves to heighten the horror of the situation and avoid melodrama.

The ambiguity of the characters is also expressed in the abrupt changes of mood. From the wild orgy around the corpse of their dead comrade the film cuts to the solemn and stately procession of the gang carrying the coffin through the streets of the small town. The inhabitants come out in force to stare at the strangely dressed young men on their curious machines as though they came from another planet. One of the crowd begins filming them for his home movies. Yet, to the gang, the world of the conforming citizens is equally distorted and inconceivable. The police who are always hustling them on, the preacher endlessly reiterating old clichés, and the mortician who smilingly extorts the maximum fee for the funeral arrangements seem to them typical representatives of that other society. The film offers no solutions. Both ways of life are equally diseased and purposeless.

Alan Collins

ALFIE

Producer-Director: Lewis Gilbert. Screenplay: Bill Naughton. Photography: Otto Heller. Music: Sonny Rollins. Technicolor. Techniscope. With: Michael Caine, Shelly Winters, Vivien Merchant, Murray Melvin, Shirley Ann Field, Jane Asher. Released by Paramount.

Alfie is a fashionable piece of garbage; its mixture of Godard, British free cinema, sex, Truffaut, and *avant-garde* — but not *too avant-garde* — jazz is being lapped up by all the 68-year-old newspaper critics who can't take these ingredients straight. (They seem to turn 68 very shortly after they begin reviewing even if they're 25 when they begin.)

But a middle-aged woman in a mini-skirt is not likely to be an attractive sight and the dressings with which the producer-director, Lewis Gilbert, adorns *Alfie* only emphasize the fact that it is a bad routine film from a competent but not particularly talented veteran director. (The kind of director you might expect to find directing the James Bond films and in fact Gilbert is now at work on *You Only Live Twice.)*

Alfie (played by Michael Caine) is that familiar movie hero, the attractive cad, whom the audience is expected to disapprove of but love all the same. This film is "modern" in that Alfie is not just a rogue, he's a real bastard. However, so as not to be accused of immorality, the film sells out near the end, and we learn that our hero isn't really happy being a working-class Don Juan; and to ensure that it doesn't get a C rating from the Legion of Decency (or whatever they call it now) *Alfie* rubs our noses in an offensively superficial and one-sided argument against abortion.

In some quarters *Alfie* is being called a "tragi-comedy". As a tragedy it's about on the level of Mary Worth. As a comedy it asks us to laugh at Alfie's callous and not very funny put-downs of his "birds"; and I presume that it was also for the sake of comedy that Gilbert gratuitously threw in a barroom brawl that any number of hack Hollywood directors could have done better.

Technically the film is barely competent. The colour is muddy and the editing sloppy. It is difficult to know whether to blame the script, the direction or the acting for the fact that *Alfie* goes in more for caricature than characterization. (And this includes Michael Caine's oft-lauded performance as Alfie.)

About the only thing in *Alfie* that can be recommended is Sonny Rollins's music and since this has been released on an Impulse record you can hear it without putting up with the drivel on the screen (and you'll get Phil Woods and Roger Kellaway as a bonus).

Joe Medjuck

THE TRAP

Producer: George H. Brown. Director: Sidney Hayers. Script: David Osborn. Photography: Robert Krasker (2nd unit: O.H. Borradaile, Bill Roozeboom). Editor: Tristam Cones. Art director: Harry White. Costumes: Margaret Furse. Music: Ron Goodwin. Great Britain/Canada, 1966. Parallel Productions for Rank, distributed by 20th Century-Fox. 106 mins. Cast: Rita Tushingham (Eve), Oliver Reed (Jean La Bête), Barbara Chilcott (Trader's wife), Rex Sevenoaks (Trader), Linda Goranson (Trader's daughter), Blain Fairman (Clerk), Walter Marsh (Preacher), Jo Golland (Baptiste), Jon Granik (No Name), Merv Campone (Yellow Dog), Reginald McReynolds (Captain).

The daily reviewers condemned *The Trap* out of hand, so I went expecting nothing and was agreeably surprised. It's still only a stereo typed action pic, but as such it works more often than not.

First, the look of the film. The B.C. scenery — so beautiful I wanted to go

right back — is nicely rendered in subtle-hued Eastman Colour (thanks mainly, I imagine, to ex-Korda cinematographer Osmond Borradaile, semi-retired since 1950 and a B.C. resident). The interiors, too, are generally convincing — the trader's home, for example, crammed with painstakingly preserved Victorian bric-a-brac which seems almost to exude the fact that it's been shipped all the way round the Horn. But the film's attempt at flawless glossy realism does break down in some ways: a plywood-thin front door, a model-looking log cabin dashed by studio snow, process canoeing shots, and a cliff-hanging sequence featuring a grainy back-projected waterfall and in the foreground (I mean it) a cliff that totters more than the actors. When will the special effects people desist from their crude efforts to cheat the color-and-Panavision camera? And — would it really be asking too much to see the actors' breath in winterscapes? Still, on the whole I was quite happy with the film's surface, and it was a very pleasant change to have a reconstruction of the *Canadian* West. (A reference in the dialogue to Vancouver as a place would set the time at about 1880, though clearly a somewhat earlier period was intended.)

The script and direction have their shortcomings. Osborn's screenplay is too often superficial and perfunctory: none of the characters is more than sketched in outline, or conceived as more than a type; the contrast between trading-post life — rough frontier realities breaking in upon genteel bourgeois pretensions — and the savagely primitive but basically good naturalness of the backwoods, is rather too simply and openly stated; and globs of exposition are from time to time dumped unrefined into the dialogue. Hayers' direction too often spoils conviction — in cutaways to animals that don't match, for instance, or in the mainly undistinguished playing of the supporting cast. It's synthetic: most of the dialogue scenes lack spontaneity and immediacy; elsewhere the joins show. Any old hack could have done it. It's a bit slack too — I missed that razor-edge crispness that makes you sit up in your seat and which only the director can supply (his *Burn Witch Burn* has it). Notwithstanding, most of the action sequences are exciting, but the film's real strength lies in the scenes between Reed and Tushingham. These are surprisingly credible — particularly the barbaric though not unlikable trapper's attempts to reach out and make some sort of contact with the woman he has purchased, but failed to touch or understand. His good-humored side and real puzzlement, and her fear of his elemental violence and virility — as well as the gradually developing bond between them — come across quite effectively; we grow to care enough about these people that their almost excessive ordeals as the winter wears on are genuinely moving. A large measure of credit must go to the two leads, who make as much of their roles as the script allows.

The music is lush and does a satisfactory job of underlining the action — that's the kind of movie it is. Without its Canadian connections it wouldn't merit detailed consideration, but it's good enough of its kind. Neither good enough nor Canadian enough, though, to rate much of a place in the long fitful chronicle of the feature film in Canada.

Tony Reif

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CLIVE DENTON ON FILM

It is amazing how one thing leads to another. First, the eminent Josef von Sternberg visits Toronto and confirms his belief in a "synthetic cinema". His own films, during our season at the National Film Theatre, begin to suggest what a synthetic cinema might be. They are lush, larger than life; his actors are his puppets (and, at less fortunate moments, they *look* like puppets). Then, suddenly, every new movie I go to seems a synthetic experience. This is partly the result of putting a name to a trend. Too much comparison of different films is bound to produce more superficial connections than meaningful ones. *Modesty Blaise* is emphatically *not* a pseudonym for *Pierrot le Fou*. Still, the trend is decided. Artifice dominates the current movie scene. What was a lonely track, when Sternberg doggedly travelled it, has now become a broad highway.

For a long time, the test of a good movie was how much it gripped you, how strongly it grabbed your attention. You were meant to be absorbed in its narrative fabric and to identify like mad with at least one major character. The power of many classic films has depended on identification — with an idealist Japanese soldier, an anguished French priest, even a Prince of Denmark — and this in complex works of art, not merely in pulp daydreaming. Nowadays there's less of this (for better or worse, probably a mixture of both). Through the cinema has blown a wind of change, a Brecht of fresh air. Whatever happened to suspension of disbelief? It got suspended. The horrendous James Bond pictures have moment-to-moment plots, which resemble wild fast car rides rather than well-planned guided tours. And in *Arabesque* (for example) the characters are simply disposable creations, devoid of humanity but provided with just enough wet strength to last the movie. While Godard is as welcome a figure as was Brecht, the indirect influence of his anarchic and quirky spirit hasn't been altogether happy. It's when personal statements get turned into blueprints by any old hack that trouble stalks the imaginative land, people being far too ready to exchange one set of cliches for another.

The director of *Arabesque*, being also the director of *Give a Girl a Break*, shouldn't really be called a hack yet, I suppose, but I do wish his recent pictures would stop being subtitled: "The Persecution of Stanley Donen by the Ghosts of MGM's Studio Orchestra". Joseph Losey is certainly not any old hack (although I don't think he has much claim to greatness either). The touching thing about that flat, flat pancake, *Modesty Blaise*, is that it bespeaks so much care and effort. The camera dutifully opens out on gay images: orange juice and *parapluies;* pop goes the colour. And the people carefully have been drained of any more life than there is to comic-strip figures . . . so what? This boring, silly film is almost as degrading to watch, in its inhuman mockery, as *Mondo Cane Number Eight*. Losey's *King and Country* (released at last) may have been overpraised and must bring back memories of a better film in *Paths of Glory*. At least, though, it makes a decent impression by its elementary humanity. Also the filmic style, while as thick and synthetic as *Modesty Blaise,* is applied to the subject in hand with considerably greater precision. The moral, I think, becomes clearer. Don't alienate, dislocate and fool around unless you can do that better than you can make ordinary films. Unless you're rather courageous and original. Unless, perhaps, you are Jean-Luc Godard

Pierrot le Fou is, as one hoped, a stunning film, and not just for the beauty of Coutard's Riviera Holiday snapshots. All at once, the movie is funny and miserable, ingratiating and defiant. Yes, a brilliant film, an intriguing chinese-box-film. And yet, I wonder. When Belmondo and Karina, that marvellous tiger and gazelle, break out of social captivity in Paris, they make for the coast, live a bum's life by the sea . . . then get involved with crooks and violence. Godard has fun with the thriller *genre,* stretches it beyond fun for its destructive associations of ideas and skilfully toys with its unreality. Belmondo asks Karina, in a peaceful moment, if they must go back to the cops-and-robbers stuff. Yes, they must, and what we now accept as logical in a real-unreal fiction film agrees that they must. But couldn't this be an evasion? Godard has started to tell of a shiftless man and woman who take shares in each other and flee from their worries. The story suggests their disillusionments, dishonesties, and eventual victory or defeat. Godard doesn't tell this story, after all, in direct terms. At the risk of asking a leopard to change his spots, I could wish he had done so.

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